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WHAT MAY WE READ?

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A CONVERSATION STORY

BY

CHARLES WALDSTEIN

Waldstein
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To the Memory

of Two Great Friends

Henry Sidgwick and Charles Dudley Warner

this little book is

dedicated

Aus meinen grossen Schmerzen
Mach ich die kleinen Lieder

Heine

PREFACE

This conversation-story was written some years ago (in 1892) and has been in my desk ever since. It is one of a series of short stories, half story and half essay, originally called by me the "Ethics of the Surface Series." I advisedly meant to present to the reading public a modern form of literary work, not unknown since the days of Plato, but still uncommon. It aimed at combining the modern form of fiction with the older forms of the dialogue, and to reproduce the actual conditions of life among thoughtful people of our own day.

The central point of interest to the composition as a work of literary art is always furnished by some social or ethical question. Such questions are usually dealt with in the form of essays, without any personal or dramatic setting. But I deliberately maintain that, from the point of view of literary art itself, the introduction of such personal and dramatic setting is justified. On the one hand, intellectual topics of this nature and the principles of social life can form, and ought to form, the subject of purely literary treatment in any

department of literature which deals with human life. They are as vital an element in our conscious existence as are any of the other aspects of life which have hitherto been the standard subjects of fiction. On the other hand, I maintain with equal strength of conviction, that the principles of social ethics, especially the "surface ethics" of life and the problems therein involved, can only gain by being thus presented in their vital personal and dramatic setting.

Prime nature with an added artistry—
No carat lost, and you have gained a ring.

Truth has gained from the life of artistic presentation, and art has lost none of its vitality from yielding its light in the quest of truth.

Each one of these "stories" was to treat some topic or problem of social ethics round which the composition was to group itself; or rather, each question or problem of social ethics was to permeate the personalities of the story, and to receive from this vitalization added life and interest. The general problem was thus made real and individual, and the personalities, their thoughts and actions, made the more human from reflecting the issues which move society at large. The highest aim which I set myself, was to weld both these

elements, supposed to be discordant, into an harmonious whole.

I may have failed in realizing this literary idea. These conversation-stories may not present a complete artistic fusion of the two elements of which they are composed. If so, the work must be criticised on that ground. But I insist with all emphasis, that the offhand and commonplace criticism which at once condemns such an effort because there is supposed to exist an *a priori* incompatibility between thought and life, truth and beauty in art, is unfounded when we consider some of the greatest of literary works in the past, and quite unjustified when prescribing the possible lines for new literary efforts in the future. In fairness to the effort I have here made, I must humbly ask that this work be not judged summarily, by reiterating the old critical saw concerning the "novel with a purpose" or the introduction of any ulterior purpose into a work of art. Such a fusion is here consciously attempted; and if I have failed, it is because of defective execution and bad workmanship, and not because the form itself is inadmissible in literature.

The present conversation-story really deals with two such problems of life, logically, and I hope organically, interwoven with each other in

the education and development of the central personality in the story. The one is the question, whether it is good for us to read everything; the other is concerned with the wider and more subtle problem of family life, as to the just balance and proportion of duty toward those with whom we are intimately associated in the family, and our duty, or our right, to follow out the development of our own individual life irrespective of our relationship to those immediately about us or dependent upon us. This latter problem has in recent days been more than once made the central topic in works of fiction.

These two problems are supposed to have played an essential part in the thought and the life of the personalities presented. I hold that they are thus essential elements in the lives of these people, because they had been so consciously prominent in their thoughts. These thoughts are exchanged between the characters in the story in conversations which educated people of that kind are always likely to hold. And the exchange of these thoughts forms a most important dramatic element —as important as any *actions* in life—in the development of their existence. I am firmly convinced that this is true of the lives of thoughtful people in modern times, even of the simpler lives

of those whose education and occupation are supposed to disfavour reflection and thoughtful conversation. And I must repeat that, if this is true, the presentation of such thoughts and of such conversations is as vital a part of actual life as are the interests, feelings and passions grouped round the sexual relations of men and women, which form the chief topic of modern fiction.

THE AUTHOR.

Newton Hall,
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Jan. 8, 1911.

WHAT MAY WE READ?

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

IT was in the summer of 1892 on the White Star Steam packet *Majestic,* one of the finest specimens of naval architecture then sailing the high seas.

The ship had lingered for some time awaiting the mail in Queenstown harbour. The town and its hills were smiling a cheery God-speed at them in the sunlight, with a hospitable Irish twinkle, which seemed to say: "Sorry to lose you; come back soon and we'll have a joke and a laugh together." Then there was busy running to and fro along the gangway; sailors carrying huge mail-bags on their bent backs.—"What do all those people find to write about? What mass of tragedy and comedy, of tenderness, hatred and greed may those thousands of letters contain?"—The huge bags were piled up even on the paddle-box and were weighing down the tender. When these had

been stowed away, there was the sharp tinkle of a bell, a few short orders, a slight crunching noise, a business-like greeting between the officers, and the huge hull, freed from its obtrusive little parasite which sheered off, steamed slowly out into the open sea, leaving the fair shores of the green island on its lee.

It was a heavenly August afternoon. The sea, like a sheet of glass, was twinkling in the sunshine, the light breeze was probably only awakened by the speed of the steamer forging rapidly ahead.

There were not many passengers on board, so there was ample room for all on deck. Some were walking about restlessly, looking back in their thoughts or ahead, engrossed in their own inner moods; some were chatting together in groups, or were pointing to the shore, where they identified the various bays and towns. There were families, old friends, newly made acquaintances; scenes of recognition, more or less demonstrative, were interrupting or enlivening the continuous swaying to and fro of the stream of promenaders; some were eagerly looking at all the other passengers, spying for acquaintances, or anxious to make new ones as soon as possible; while others were strolling listlessly or demurely, with blank expressions

on their faces, determined to manifest no special interest in the others and no anxiety, or even desire, to increase the number of their acquaintances. But most were comfortably seated in their steamer chairs and were either looking over the sea dreamily or watching the receding shore. Others were reading.

Among those thus seated was a young lady, Ruth Ward of Boston, and a youngish man of about thirty, George L. Van Zant of New York. They did not know each other. Their chairs nearly joined, hers somewhat sheltered behind the projection of a deck-cabin, his further forward and obliquely to hers, so that she could observe him, while he had to turn slightly to the right to see her.

The girl had every now and then cast an interested glance at the man, who was reading what was evidently a French novel. Its yellow paper cover alone stamped it as the production of one of the firms, Calmann-Levy, Charpentier, Firmin Didot or some such Paris publisher.

It was not only the intentness with which he read the book that attracted her attention and aroused her curiosity; for he was not an over-demonstrative reader. On the contrary, his knit brow remained unchanged as he followed the story

he was reading and there was a look of disgust, rather than one of fascinated interest, in his face. But her curiosity was further stimulated by the fact that she could not succeed in reading the title of the book. She wondered whether it was intentional that, from the moment he appeared with the book under his arm, she had not been able to get a good look at the title page. For when he came walking up to his chair with the book under his arm, the title-page was pressed to his side, while the back with the announcement of other books in smaller type, illegible from where she sat, was the only part of the book he presented to view. Even when it lay on his lap, after he had sat down, the back was uppermost, and the moment he began to read, after finishing the first page, he at once turned the page with the title round the back, continuing carefully to hold the book, not spread open, but as if it was a single page.

Was this an intentional act of concealment on his part, or was it quite accidental? She could not make this out. Nor could the young man reading have answered her. Perhaps a desire to hide the title was latent and emanated from an instinctive or half-conscious impulse.

With a feeling of impatience and disappointment she had given up her attempt to read the

title, and resolved to cast the stupid matter out of her mind, as, after all, quite unimportant, and she began to look over the sea with her fresh young face bent forward, dreaming. But a somewhat saddened and yet eager look that came into her eyes as she gazed, a slight twitching about the mouth, a touch of drawnness about the cheek counteracted the first impression of freshness; and the eagerness of the eyes disturbed the repose. They were sunk too deeply to convey peace and calm happiness or serenity, though their lightness was thereby warmed to a more spiritual glow.

Her thoughts or dreams were not continuous as she gazed over the sea; for now and again she would direct her attention to one of the promenaders or would examine some object on the deck; while her fingers would intertwine in restless play, though she sat quite still; and then she would fold her hands quietly in her lap again. Most frequently she would turn and examine the man reading, almost against her will.

She evidently tried not to look towards him and her glances in his direction became more and more infrequent, when suddenly her attention was fixed on him by a change in the hitherto immovable countenance. Had she not before familiarised herself with the face and its expression, the change

would hardly have been noticed; but she now saw how the knit brow contracted into a decided frown, how the lips were tightly pressed together, the corners of the mouth drawn down in a manifest burst of indignation and disgust.

With a sudden thrust or jerk of his whole body he rose to his feet from his reclining position and stood erect. There was something violent in this movement which might have been accompanied by some expletive. But this sudden outburst was at once checked. He paused, then walked slowly to the rails, and calmly threw the book into the sea. He did not stop to watch it; but with composed face he turned round, took his cigarette-case from his pocket, lit a cigarette and strolled quietly away.

For one moment his eye had caught those of the girl watching him with fixed intentness, and his colour seemed to rise. He was evidently displeased with being watched and, still more, with having ostentatiously given way to a rapid impulse in the sight of strangers.

"Just what I should have expected of him," she muttered to herself between her teeth, as she looked after his receding form. "Bourgeois! Financier!—a bad mixture!"

CHAPTER II

RUTH had noticed George Van Zant with artistic interest the moment she had left London for Liverpool. They had travelled together in the same carriage on the London and North-western Railway. She had liked his face; but, above all, it had fascinated her as an artist. It was clean-shaven, with finely cut features, somewhat sallowed and worn, perhaps hardened by a passionate life. The firm mouth had a remote suggestion of sensuality in the fuller lower lip with its softer curves; but this was at once dispelled by the more decided lines of the thinner upper lip, accentuated in its outline by the light-coloured border between the red of the lip and the dark grey-blue where the moustache had been shaven. With people who shave constantly this peculiar accentuation in the outline of the upper lip often lends an exaggerated impression of hardness to the mouth. She then noticed the strong, slightly protruding, though not pointed chin, and the flat jaws and cheeks, all too angular to suit the "classicists," but pleasing to her in their simple massiveness. A few strokes of the brush would fix their

character on the canvas. But the eyes, of an undefined colour, sunk deep beneath the brow, presented delightful masses of light and shade, and lent to the face a dreamy, nay, a soft expression, which contrasted markedly with the decision suggested by mouth and chin. The feature which interested her least was the nose. It was too "classical," too exasperatingly "perfect"; and "perfection" always suggested want of character to her. It was rather long than short, thin than thick, though the upper part of the bridge was broad, the sides rather flat and straight as they joined the cheeks. The nostrils were delicately curved and suited the work of a gem engraver rather than that of a painter. "Too much line-work, not enough planes and masses for colour and brush," she thought, as she turned from examining the face, fearing that he might have noticed her stare.

She had studied it all as an artist and imagined herself drawing the face. She longed to have him before her easel. "It would be difficult not to make the face and its expression too hard or else to lose all character"—she summarised her subjective criticism as a painter.

She was further puzzled in determining his nationality and what might be his occupation.

When he entered the railway carriage his dress

and bearing made her think him an Englishman; but the way he instinctively raised his hat indefinitely to all the occupants led her to put him down as a Frenchman. On the whole, though, the general cast of the face, with mouth, chin and jaw, marked a type with which she was familiar in some severe American statesmen, a refined Yankee type. But she always remembered it in old men with grey hair. If only he would take off his hat so that she could see the top of his head! She was sure the hair was strikingly thick and smooth. Yet this was a young man.

Was he a man of affairs or profession? No. He did not fit into any one of their categories as known to her, and a suggestion in him from the one was at once contradicted by something in his dress, manner or bearing, belonging to the other. An artist? Perhaps. But for this he appeared too calm; nor had the sedate elegance of his dress, with a touch of the sportsman about it, anything of the originality which always shows itself somewhere in an artist's clothes. He was probably an ordinary man of leisure. A gentleman, a man of refinement, he certainly was.

He had helped her with her hand-luggage as they left the train for the hotel; and she had then lost sight of him until the disagreeable moment

when she found herself packed together with a couple of hundred other travellers on the tender which was to take them to the *Majestic.*

While all the passengers were suffering from the inconvenience of being hustled, hand-luggage and all, in the insufficient space allotted to them on one small tender, and were grumblingly waiting in irritated disgust till the huge mass of larger luggage was transported from the dock to their boat, an empty tender of the same build and dimensions was lying along side with several large trunks and boxes and some elegant hand-bags on its deck—an insignificant mass compared to the bulk which was continually increasing on their own. Presently aboard this boat there came in cool leisureliness, chatting pleasantly with one another, a group of six or seven people: two older couples, a smart young woman or two, and the travelling companion whose face had interested her so much on the way from London.

When this party, cool and unruffled, smiling and laughing, and looking down in compassionate wonder at the mass of perspiring and grumbling travellers packed like sheep on the boat beside them, had settled themselves on the quarter-deck, the captain gave his signal, and off they steamed calmly towards the *Majestic,* leav-

ing the other tender with its load to wait for another half hour until the stray "sheep" and the stray luggage had all been collected. They would, no doubt, arrive on board the *Majestic* long before the others, would have the whole ship and all the stewards to themselves, would be comfortably and quietly settled in their cabins, with their steamer-luggage unpacked, before the rushing mob arrived, raging about to find their cabins, shouting for stewards, collecting their trunks and bags, clamouring for those that had been mislaid, crowded and hampered at every step, and sitting down wearily in exhaustion, giving it all up, their nerves unstrung with the nausea of excitement before the steamer had even begun to move.

Ruth, in the obscurity of her cramped position, holding her small dressing bag with her few valuables tightly in her hand, pressed and almost submerged by the mass of people about her, watched the luxurious party on the deck of the neighbouring tender. She followed every movement of her London travelling companion, who had busied himself in attending to one of the ladies and was now conversing with a portly and ruddy man of about sixty, whose assured air of self-importance marked him as the chief organiser and leader of the party—a real boss. She

overheard the remarks and comments of the people about her, who were all looking at the same scene. For a moment the mere fact that she had been travelling in the same carriage with the young man, who formed part of this objectionable company, whose face she had studied with such interest and every line of which she seemed to know intimately,—for a moment she felt an impulse like loyalty to friends, as if she must stand up for him in the face of such flaunting vulgarity and shoddyism. She watched him as he moved about; and every movement, the calm, almost retiring, manner in which he never showed himself fully to the assembled crowd, and the almost studious attempt not to look at them, made her feel that he was not of the party, that he really was a different kind of man.

At this moment he was standing with his back to them, leaning against the railings, impassive and immovable, while the two young ladies of the party, smartly dressed and exuberant in their lively chatter, were talking to him and were directly facing the crowd below. They seemed to be enjoying the very contrast of their comfort. Ruth felt sure that they were making remarks, meant to be comic, on the bedraggled, excited or wearied looks of the travellers below; and she be-

gan to resent the higher opinion she had formed of him before. How could he stand that? How could he be associated with such people at all?

"Why, don't you know who he is?" she heard a heavy-moustached, showily dressed man in a light suit and a new top hat, evidently a "drummer," say to his lean, dyspeptic-looking Western colleague in a round hat and new frock coat, "Why that is Sam Beek, the J. Y. O. railway king. He's a 'plunger!' He could buy up half the kings in Europe if he liked."

He imparted this information in a loud voice with gusto, and evidently felt that his familiarity with such a notable reflected distinction upon himself. He continued to give details of the wealth of the railway king, of the big deals of this—the "smartest man west of the Rockies"; and took pains to mention the names of all the parties concerned, carefully adding the abbreviated Christian names as he rolled them off.

"And who is that tall old man with the grey whiskers and the white cravat?" the round-hatted man continued to ask. "He must be a parson. Perhaps he's the parson and the young fellow the doctor. The one smooths the road to heaven, while the other blocks it up with medicine chests, and both of them stoop down and pick up the gold

which he drops on the rails as he steams along on the J. Y. O. express."

A tall stout man in a black coat and ostentatious white tie,—accompanied by a thin, worn, plaintive looking woman in a bonnet, and a tall, burly, red-faced girl in a white linen suit with crimson ribbons, the image of the round-faced man,—turned, twisting his fat neck, and stared with frowning eyes at the Western "drummer." The young lady in white spoke at her father rather than to him, and her words were clearly meant for her neighbours.

"Mr. Sandeman is not only a Christian, but even a gentleman. If all the people one met were like him, it would be a pleasure to travel, wouldn't it, father?" There had evidently been some travelling altercation between the "drummers" and the clergyman before.

"Yes, daughter," said the clergyman in a drawling voice, singing and nasal; "Mr. Sandeman might well be a clergyman. I have often found him more familiar with some portions of theologic lore than myself. I should think that a man of such unbounded Christian charity as the founder of the Home for Strayed Revellers worthy of respect, even from heathens. I have seen no nobler or more practically efficacious in-

stitution in the whole of my European wanderings,—excepting perhaps the Golgotha Asylum of Life in the Holy Land, and . . ."

Here the voice of the top-hatted "drummer" drowned that of the clergyman. He had been puzzled before as to the identity of the white-whiskered man on the other tender. Now he bawled out.

"Bill Sandeman is one of the biggest philanthropists in New York. He knows more about running an Asylum, or a Home for Inebriates, or a penitentiary, museum or college, than any man in the country. He is the real head of the solidest commission house in New York. If it wasn't for him, Brewster, Sandeman and Lucas would have bust up in the '73 panic. Old Charlie Brewster and Sam Lucas lost their heads. They are nowhere for cool sharpness. . . ."

And then Ruth listened to the family in front of her. The meek and worn old lady was saying in a moaning yet penetrating voice to her husband:

"He is in very truth a very good and noble man —*and* considerate. You know, Abraham, that his was the first name to that letter from your parishioners urging you to take a year's trip to the Holy Land to restore your nervous debility. What a pity you did not see him on shore, and we might

have been spared all this annoyance." And she looked longingly up at the deck of the millionaire's chartered vessel.

"I shook hands with Mr. Sandeman in the vestibule of the hotel," the husband continued pompously. "He was very busy with his party. He is . . ."

And here the drawl of the Western drummer again caught her ear.

"I suppose that young fellow is an English lord. Our rich men must always have a lord hanging about them, that's part of the show. I suppose he is fooling round one of those girls and their oof. That's what's ruining our country, the unpatriotic foolery of our rich men! As if some of our young fellows out West wasn't as good and ten times better. . . ."

And she listened no more.

CHAPTER III

MEANWHILE, poor George Van Zant was quite innocent, and was in no way to blame for the ostentatious surroundings which elicited all this comment. It had all come about very simply and he had drifted into the party without intention or forethought.

On the morning of sailing he had found himself face to face with Mr. Sandeman in the hall of the hotel at Liverpool. The luggage arranged in masses about the hall, the porters and travellers running about—all betokened the departure of one of the great Atlantic liners. Van Zant had a physical shrinking from such bustle and confusion; it was almost acute pain to him; it paralysed his will and put him into a kind of hypnotic trance. Instead of bracing up his energies and arranging for his own departure, he was lolling about the hall, watching the activity and confusion about him with distant eyes, as if he were witnessing a play. His meeting with Mr. Sandeman recalled him to reality and made him at once conscious of the task before him and the part he had set himself to play in a new life, contrastng so markedly with his

ten years of study and calm contemplation free from responsibilities.

He had deliberately and firmly resolved to take up a new career in America, to forego contemplation, fastidious reserve, the search for, and the enjoyment of, life's refinements, with the careful avoidance of all conditions that were vulgar or commonplace and ungainly. Above all he meant to seek for what was best in the people he met, and to show them the appreciativeness and affability which the good in them deserved.

Though he had not seen Mr. Sandeman since he was a schoolboy, he recalled the fact that he was his father's friend, a truly honourable man, and one possessed of intellectual and moral qualities beyond those which made him a successful business man and a prominent philanthropist. And herein he was right. For Mr. Sandeman had not only read a great deal (with perhaps a too narrow exclusiveness as regards the literature he dogmatically undertook to class as superior and elevating), but had travelled much. Above all, he possessed dignity of character and manner, the result of this very self-reliance and dogmatic at-one-ness with his main views of life. There was no vacillation and uncertainty of touch about him, which often detract from the dignity of people

more just and refined in feeling than Mr. Sandeman, and who perceive and consider the moral atmosphere in which they find themselves and adapt themselves to it.

Mr. Sandeman's greeting of his old friend's son was cordial; and when he heard the younger man's dread of the embarkation, he at once said:

"Oh, you must join our party. Mr. Beek and I have chartered a tender and we expect an omnibus in a quarter of an hour. My wife is rather delicate and I am glad to spare her this trial. There she is. Do you remember her? Come, let me introduce you to the other members of our party."

And so he was presented to Mrs. Sandeman and the others.

Mrs. Sandeman was a refined and matronly woman, essentially quiet and mild, and yet with a suspicion of firmness and decision lurking somewhere well concealed from view. She had beautiful white hair, and soft blue eyes—a truly lovable face such as many American mothers have. It must be that in them the refinement of the world and of an active social life is thoroughly blended with a domestic tone of warm comfort and family affection, not loudly obtrusive and clamorous as is the case in France and Germany, and still not as off-hand and suppressed as in England. Her large

family of boys and girls was scattered about the world, all following, without constant interference or claims of filial devotion, their several vocations and interests, and yet manifesting childlike submission and tenderness in their frequent visits to the parental home. Mrs. Sandeman at once suggested the woman of the world, who knew and appreciated all the niceties of social manners. One could imagine her dressed brilliantly and in excellent taste with rare jewels—though she now wore a travelling dress of extreme simplicity—dispensing a graceful hospitality, and quietly encouraging the shy and subduing the exuberant unknown to them. At the same time, and above all, one felt in her the mother who had sat by the bedside of her children when they were ill, had mourned deeply over the death of a little one, had played with them, quietly reprimanded them, gently but firmly; had mended her girls' dolls and sewn their dresses, had listened with unfeigned earnestness to the impressive account of her boys' games and the internal affairs of their school life, had welcomed and treated as young friends her children's friends, when they spent weeks with them at their country home during the holidays. One knew that she was familiar with every department of her great household, that she kept

careful account of the large expenditure it entailed, and that she entered as well into all the complicated financial transactions which her husband confided to her sympathetic judgment, when he returned harassed from business, and often got help and clear-sighted advice from her. One felt convinced that she kept in gentle control the restive Irish and other foreign servants in her large household, and was a friend and adviser to many a "Lizzy" and "Mary" among them when they were in trouble, even long after they had left her service. And thus, having well begun her charity at home, one felt sure that there was enough cordial vitality left in her to go far afield and abroad and dispense her gentle kindness to poor and sick, as well as to rich and sane in the wide world, far away from her own domestic circle.

Van Zant was so much and so pleasantly engrossed in Mrs. Sandeman, who at once spoke of his own parents and of bygone days, that he hardly noticed the stout, red-faced man who shook him cordially by the hand with a "glad to make your acquaintance, sir." Beside him were two showily dressed, lively girls, who seemed full of good spirits and an elderly lady, evidently their mother.

He had completely recovered from his troubled

and dazed fear of the embarkation; and when he was told that all he need do was to point out his own luggage, and then found himself in the omnibus with his new friends, driving to the landing stage, he blessed the kind star that had brought such good fortune to him.

But the moment he stepped on the deck of the tender and witnessed the scene beside them, he felt an uneasiness and a sadness of heart which made him regret the more physical discomfort of the embarkation in mass. Not only did the direct and immediate impression of this flaunting contrast, with its shock to his social feeling and taste, produce a sickening revolt and protest; but it flew in the face of all his settled convictions, which he had thought out and lived through these many years, until they had become part of his emotional nature, a mental habit and instinct.

After much reading, thought and experience of life, he had come to the conclusion that positive socialism was an ideal unattainable in the immediate future, and, therefore, undesirable as a practical guide to individual action in the present. He did not think it necessary, nor desirable, that the standards of refined living should be lowered. The advancement of comfort and even luxury, which a highly developed civilisation had painfully evolved

after ages of struggle with barbarism, he felt convinced ought to be jealously guarded. For savagery was never wholly extinct in human communities, nay it was always in full offensive armour, to throw down and annihilate what man's intellect and taste had snatched from the struggle of material existence.

Wherever individual wealth could create and produce such conditions of refinement—even though they could not be extended to all—it was right that they should be confirmed and enjoyed.

There was nothing wrong in that his party should use every legitimate means of avoiding the tortures of the ordinary embarkation, and should charter a steamer, if their means allowed them to do this, —especially in view of the delicate health of an elderly lady. Yet, though there was no need of secrecy, it should have been done quietly and privately. But Van Zant felt that thus to flaunt the exceptional good fortune, which wealth enabled one to enjoy, in the face of so many people less favourably placed—even suffering the pain which one had succeeded in avoiding—was unsocial, besides being in bad taste.

As he stood on the deck of the tender talking to the two Miss Beeks, he felt impatient, even angry, with them for their insensibility to all these facts;

and when they pointed to the crowd and remarked upon their bedraggled looks, he feared that he would betray his irritation, and so he left them as the tender moved off, and sat beside Mrs. Sandeman.

She noticed his altered mood and at once discerned the cause. She had similar feelings herself, and was offended in her taste. But when they talked it over, compassion for their fellow-travellers, especially the women and children, was uppermost in her; while he dwelt more upon the general social aspect of the question.

Before they started, for one second, his eyes had met those of Ruth Ward as she gazed up from the crowd below, and he at once looked away. It pained him to see her there.

The graceful, slim and well-knit figure of the girl had attracted his attention at Euston Station in London. Her light and firm walk, the fearless way she carried her head and moved about with independence and without fussy hurry, made him single her out among the crowd; and when he caught a glimpse of her face, he at once determined to get into the same carriage with her, even if he had to forego his smoke for a few hours. He too had studied her face while they sat opposite each other, though not with that calm,

manifest scrutiny or with the dispassionate professional analysis of an artist.

He was chiefly struck by the general effect of such delicate beauty, beaming from eyes with long lashes, the spiritual purity and grace in all the features of the countenance, framed by her thick hair, the Madonna face, which still had the sprightly life and vivacity, the craving for amusement of the American girl, and beneath its softness and intensity the lurking spirit of humour. But in repose the most marked traits of the face were character, decision and purpose.

Nay, these features were so predominant that this counteracted in his feelings the powerful attraction she had at once exercised over him and set his thoughts, as he sat there, to oppose themselves to the emotional impulse which drew him towards her. For the eager and earnest look, the preoccupied restlessness which battled against the natural repose, as well as the cheerfulness and brightness, of her face, had left their traces on her countenance.

"Poor thing," he thought, "she is not exactly the school-ma'am who has struggled to amass the needed money for a European tour, nor is she the poor artist slaving away in studios against untoward circumstances and means, a needy family

impatiently awaiting the material profit of so much sacrifice, and—a fundamentally inartistic temperament and education in herself."

"No," he continued to think as he stared blankly out of the railway carriage, "she is not that; for her dress and her bearing and manner have a certain style which speaks of affluence. But she has been contaminated by it. The "struggle" about her has exercised contagion; or, at all events, the intensity of the enthusiasm in the struggle and the "protest" have tended that way. Even in her dress and the manner of doing her hair I perceive the fading, withering effect of the scorching, parching sun of Bohemia or Altruria."

And he recalled his innumerable experiences of such types during his ten continuous years in Europe, which left in him a melancholy distaste, a depressing fear. At all events, they no longer attracted him.

At first he had been charmed and elated when he came across the warm, almost fierce, enthusiasm of his countrymen and women for the historic beauty and spirituality of the great past, for the living art and science, the traditions and associations, the social maturity and secureness of their European mother countries. They mingled in their glowing natures the energy and vigour of

the backwoodsmen with the civilised taste and refinements of ancient aristocrats, as they burrowed, dug and delved in the antique soil, exhausted and almost sterile as regards practical yield, yet rich and fertile with the treasures of past reminiscence and mature refinements of life. He had met the young graduate of youthful universities, who had undertaken "chores" to pay his way through college; or the middle-aged schoolmaster, who had taught village boys and girls in elementary schools for years to save the needed money—he had met them in the lecture rooms of German professors, and at the *giri* of archæologists at Athens and Rome, greedily drinking in the words of ancient lore in wrapt, almost religious, exaltation and gratitude. How it contrasted with the *blasé,* matter-of-fact, nay, materialistic bluntness of many refined Oxford and Cambridge men, whose enthusiasm for learning, the traditions of lucrative scholarships at school and university, the predominance of sport and the prestige of politics had effectively extirpated from their souls! He had lived in the young artist-communities where so many, with the same courage and sacrifice, were slaving away in Paris and London and Munich, but in the seventh heaven of spiritual delight, as they wandered through the museums and exhibi-

tions, or walked in the often thick and sordid, yet to them limpid, atmosphere of the Latin Quarter. He had even forgiven the indiscriminate mass of American tourists their crude or gushing remarks, as they greeted the treasures of the Old World from the moment they strolled through the streets of Chester. Nay, to him, there was even something to be said in favour of the naive and sincere admiration of peerages, titles and blazonry; for to these people they were simply life-illustrations to Shakespeare and Walter Scott, and their souls were thus freed from vulgarity.

Many a time he had spoken to such Americans without knowing them, had offered his services and had entered into many a life which otherwise would never have crossed his own. But soon the element of surprise at this interesting mixture of crudeness and simplicity with love and appreciation of what is mature and completely refined lost its edge; the constant repercussion of the same impressions led to monotony. What had appeared exceptional became the rule; the same thoughts, the same feelings, expressed almost in the same language, were repeated to him again and again with the same warmth of enthusiasm, and with the same intensity of interest, which showed that they were quite spontaneous, original

and new to the one who enunciated them, as if they had never been felt, thought or expressed before. He could almost have predicted what such persons would say the moment he met them: the same broad theories in which a certain grain of truth was mixed up with a mass of crudities and over-statement, and all expressed imperfectly and haltingly though with deepest conviction. He could almost have predicted their actions and the different stages of their mental development. He was utterly wearied with the attempt to guide them or sympathetically to modify their opinions. He might have written out, for constant use, a course of dialectic argument to meet their statements, which would have suited nearly every one of them. And so a weariness and a shrinking came over him the moment he met one of these people.

But with this weariness there mingled a more active sense of opposition and intolerance. It was a distaste engendered by the very element of "struggle" stamped on their brows, and this had an additional personal intensity: He had passed through the raging sea of "struggle" himself, and had at last emerged into the calm waters of settled views and purpose. And these troubled waters, as he looked out upon them from his serener

haven, appeared ungainly and turbid; they had not the grandeur of rushing storm-waves and huge breakers dashing against the rocks; they were more like pools and puddles, churned into petty turmoil by furious splashing, and sending feeble eccentric rings, that had once appeared great breakers, from the little centre of revolt against established order. Looking back upon his own past, Promethean revolt he saw as the self-imposed and self-gratified exile from Mayfair to Fleet Street; Maccabean steadfastness was caricatured into Bohemian eccentricity. Eccentricity, and even originality, were no longer beautiful and certainly not sublime. The poetry was gone, and there remained but irritating jingle, which became positively distasteful. This reminiscence of his own past counteracted sympathy and justice towards others.

Grave faults and passions once our own are the more readily forgiven in others; weaknesses and eccentricities recognised in others are the more intolerable from having once been ours.

And thus it was that certain suggestions in Ruth's face and its expression, her dress and her bearing counteracted for the time the powerful attraction which at first sight the girl had exercised over George Van Zant.

CHAPTER IV

WHEN Ruth Ward had relieved her feelings of disgust at the young man, whose nerves were too delicately refined to stand what was probably "the sacred rendering of Truth to Life in a book by one of the courageous masters of French fiction," she watched his steps as he advanced and joined the two girls who were chatting and smiling together at the stern. They had been looking in his direction several times before and had passed where he was sitting while he was engrossed in his book. Now they at once entered into lively conversation with him.

"That's right, that's the company that suits you!" Ruth said to herself sneeringly; "there you will find security from the dreadful temptations of life, and respectability and ease and comfort. Thank heaven, that I have escaped from that! I hope I shall never be forced to live in that atmosphere. But there is no danger."

And she remembered gratefully how her parents had given her full liberty when she was at home in Boston; how they did not force her into the highly respectable circle of their friends, but

allowed her to choose her own from among the artistic and literary people of that town; had even encouraged her to take up art and had never pressed her to join in the dances and parties of their wealthy and prominent friends and relations; how, finally, they had even consented to allow her to go to Europe, to travel and to study art, though they had sent a poor spinster relative with her. But even this they had urged more on the ground of kindness to their delicate relative than from any suggestion that Ruth "required to be looked after." They had not protested when, a year after, they having spent some months with her in Paris, the spinster lady had returned alone and Ruth had begged for a few more years to complete her training. All they asked was that she should spend three months every year with them in their American home, should they not be able to join her in Europe.

This condition required no insistence, for she was passionately devoted to her parents. Her father was in truth her most intimate friend, in spite of the radically different views they held on life and art. But even in these he never insisted upon enforcing his own views and respected her liberty of conscience and of thought. From the earliest years, though he had quoted, recommended and

praised his favourite authors and thinkers, so that she was fairly familiar with them at second hand, he had allowed her to read whatever she chose. These were generally books recommended by a youngish old lady, a leading member of an advanced ladies' society from the wealthy world, who besides being devoted to good works, had found time to study medicine in America and Germany, and art in Paris, and though of the severest morality in her own life, had advanced views on matrimony, politics—in fact on most things. It was but a passing influence which this lady had exercised upon Ruth in her early years and lasted but a short time. She was then about eighteen years old and had already had enough dances and picnics and innocent flirtations with "best boys." But her friend's influence had been intense while it lasted; and though she had now almost forgotten that period of her life and the advanced thinker and reformer, it had perhaps determined the general drift and trend of her thought for all the subsequent years.

She felt the gulf of thought, feeling, experience and aspiration that must separate her from those two young persons with whom the young man was now talking. It is true the "expenses" of the conversation were entirely borne by the girls, who

did not seem to grudge the sacrifice. "How could a man with such a face listen to such chatter?"

The three now began to walk up and down and they passed her chair. She heard the words "drawing-room," "our carriage would not come," "tiara," "train." They were evidently describing to him their presentation to the Queen, at the Drawing Room in Buckingham Palace. And as they passed again she caught: "She is the sweetest, cunningest old thing I have ever seen!"

To this the "earnest reader" was listening with serious attention, and yet she thought she saw an amused twinkle in his face as the elder girl was thus describing the scene of the royal presentation.

She now began to scrutinise the girls' dresses. They were dressed alike. She had always decided that if she had had a sister, she would under no condition have gone in for wholesale purchases nor have flaunted their close family relationship in the face of the public. And these dresses began to interest her. They were no doubt "smart:" They were tailor-made. She knew what tailor in London had made them; dull tan whip-cord, a faded tint between brown and yellow, decidedly horsey. They were smart, and still there was something wrong; not only in the way they wore them, but in

the very make of them. The tailor had not taken real trouble with them. "They wouldn't know; anything will do" he probably said, and probably they were made in a hurry without trying on. If the differences in such simple and unadorned costumes were slight and not easily recognised except by the expert, Ruth appreciated them, and they were then felt all the more. A certain loose or dishevelled touch in an evening or an ordinary woman-made dress, after all, suited the lines and the character of women, and there was a wider margin between what was good and positively ill-fitting and bad. But when the neatness and compactness of such tailor-made clothes encroached upon the severer, well-defined convention of male apparel, nay, the riding male who approached military discipline in his get up, the slightest negligence or deviation became a distinct fault. The coats, with a touch of looseness in the back of the waist, were too loose; the wide pockets of the gown with their flaps were a trifle too far in front; the only two folds in the smoothly falling texture on either side came too far behind, and thus made the plain surface of the gown too wide in front—"and then they were badly put on and badly worn."

There was a delicate sneer of exultant superi-

ority in her face as she noted all this. And she rose with determination from her chair.

"I'll show them and him what the real thing is like," she said to herself. "But I dare say they won't appreciate the difference. And he? Well, he . . ."

And she hastened down to her cabin. Before she began to unpack she looked at herself in the mirror, and an expression of displeasure, even vexation, came over her face. Her hair and her dress seemed to her disorderly and slovenly and travel-stained. Her blouse was crumpled, her large straw hat with feathers seemed singularly out of place on board a steamer. She made up her mind to change completely. So she began to unpack hastily. It was hard work, for the dress she was seeking was, as is usual, at the bottom of her trunk. It was a tailor-made suit, similar to those worn by the Beek girls; but the whip-cord, instead of tan colour, was of a rich steel grey.

After she had washed and sat before her mirror, combing and braiding her hair, the colour had come to her face and she looked flushed and eager. She could not help smiling at herself in the mirror—she was reminded of her early girlhood and unconsciously felt herself transplanted back to those thoughtlessly happy days. There was a girl-

ish activity and determination as she braided her hair, this time firmly and neatly—without waves and fluffiness—as suited a tailor-made girl. It was all to be firm and compact. She brought an earnestness into this business of dressing which she had not experienced since she took up art and serious study. When she had put on her grey dress, she sat pondering with knit brow over the important question of the hat.

"What hat would go with that dress?"

This was indeed a problem. The broad straw hat with feathers she had been wearing was quite out of the question; nor would any of the more elaborate hats do. The hat which harmonised best with it was a black, stiff round hat which she wore with her riding habit. But she felt the incongruity of wearing it on shipboard; it was a little too orthodox with the whip-cord, and had a touch of horse-marine. She remembered her brother once sneering at men who walked the decks of ships in knickerbockers or riding gaiters. Caps she had three: a Tam O'Shanter, a grey tweed golfing cap, and a small check double-peaked stalking cap. The two latter might do; but it was—well—a little too much. Suddenly she rose with a happy inspiration; and though it meant the trouble of going with the steward to the bag-

gage room, she succeeded in capturing her double hat box. She took from it a neat felt Tyrolese hat which came from Homburg. It was of a dark bottle green with a bird's black wing stuck firmly in the side. As she put it on and looked at herself in the mirror, she was perfectly satisfied.

There was still some questioning in her mind as to the tie for her high turn-down man's collar to go with her grey suit and green hat. The choice lay between three: a really good violet—this, though a fine combination with dark green and grey, was too much colour for a steamship at sea —a beautiful shade of green, still dark, but lighter than her hat, and a black silk. The last was certainly safest and most refined; but she decided upon the green, which had more colour and had a vague suggestion of the grey tones over the sea and the green waves.

When Ruth appeared on deck there was a firmness and an elastic spring in her walk, and in her a fresh enjoyment of the sea and an unconsciousness of the people about her. She was happy in herself and with the great ocean. Still she soon began to look for the three people who had given the first stimulus to her metamorphosis in appearance —and in her mood. She now perceived the two sisters walking side by side in a bored manner.

They evidently had not much to say to each other. The earnest reader had left them. No doubt he had soon had enough of drawing-rooms and tiaras and trains. But as she approached and passed them, she noticed with some exultation their interested stare, and she felt convinced they would turn and look at her after she had passed. As a matter of fact she noticed that when she came to the end of the deck and turned back, she at once encountered the two girls again, whom she ought not to have met till half way down if they had not turned back at once after passing her.

But she did not trouble much about the girls nor about the promenaders whom she passed, or the people who were lining the decks in their chairs. She looked over the sea and at the sky, and was intensely happy. She was reminded of what her father said to account for his dressing for dinner even when alone. "I do it for myself. It has the greatest moral effect. You get rid of your workaday thoughts and worries and moods in shedding your workaday clothes. Soap and water wash away more than dust and dirt."

It was some time before she perceived Van Zant, who was sitting with Mrs. Sandeman in interested conversation. The older lady had at once

noticed the young girl and had pointed her out to the young man.

"Now there is a really pretty girl! And how quietly elegant she is! She is the only interesting and truly attractive person I have yet seen on board," the old lady said, while her eyes followed Ruth.

Van Zant had indeed noticed Ruth, as well as the radical change in her appearance, and he sat staring after her so that he missed Mrs. Sandeman's remark. The old lady continued:

"She is certainly a lady. Can she be quite alone? I wonder whether she is English or American? If she is alone she must certainly be American."

By this time Van Zant had recovered from his stare. "I am sure she is American, and I should have said artistic, a young lady studying art abroad—though I am beginning to doubt it," Van Zant said, while he still followed the girl with his eyes and shook his head questioningly.

"She is very pretty," said Mrs. Sandeman.

"She is almost beautiful," he added.

"How graceful she is," remarked the old lady as she ended her scrutiny and turned to Van Zant. "Yes, none but an American girl could travel alone like that. And none but an American girl could

walk up and down with such self-possession, and yet without a touch of effrontery and forwardness. You see,"—and she seemed to be continuing their previous talk—"self-reliance, as well as the adaptability you mentioned, is one of the leading features of American women. It required the peculiar training from infancy upwards which our girls get, to give her such dignity without shyness, when she has to walk alone on the crowded deck of a steamer."

The self-reliance and even the dignity were beginning to wane in poor Ruth Ward. The ebullient delight in her own health, in the fresh air, and the grand placidity of the sea were passing slowly out of her.

She had noticed Van Zant seated with Mrs. Sandeman, the one lady who had at once attracted her. She immediately perceived the change in Van Zant's demeanour and in the expression of his face, as he talked to the old lady, from what they had been while he sat silently in the railway carriage, and while he was chatting with the Beek girls. There was an animation, a pliancy, a humble desire to please, or rather to give pleasure, which gave new life and soul to the whole face. She saw all this at one glance, and above all, in that one glance she saw the smile which lit up the serious

and almost hard face to a softness, a sunny brightness and pleading affectionateness which one expected only in a child. It moved her singularly.

"The painter can never give that to a face," she thought with a sigh.

But then she also began to realise and to feel with some discomfort that she was quite alone, and her firm and unconcerned walk lost its naturalness. Was she tired? She would have liked to lean on some one, to take the arm of some companion, and to chat and listen.

And she began to scrutinise the people whom before she had not looked at, searching for some known face, even that of a chance acquaintance. Were there no Boston people on board who knew her or her family? Surely there must be. But where were they?

Looking at the people, who looked back at her with varying degrees of inquisitiveness or encouraging affability, did not help to maintain the dignity and self-reliance in her walk. And the two Beek girls, who were manifestly discussing her with animation, began to irritate her intensely. It was indeed hard to remain dignified and unconcerned, to manifest to others that one did not need them and was quite happy by one's self, when one was utterly alone among a laughing, chatting

crowd of people who would look and make remarks—perhaps compassionate remarks—upon one's loneliness. If only she had a girl, anybody to turn to and walk with, to whom she could at least direct her eyes, to avoid looking at the people, or to stare fixedly or dismally before her, to change her expression, instead of looking sad or bored or ridiculously serious!

And so she stopped walking in disgust and leaned over the side of the ship and gazed over the sea and towards the horizon.

Soon all the irritation left her and she forgot all about the ship, the people, the two girls, the young man. There was a gentle breeze springing up from the southwest, there were ripples and small lapping waves all over the sea, and the sky was filling with clouds in the west, as if to stem the progress of the sun that was sinking down in slow majesty towards the horizon, followed in its stately progress by a number of small fleeting clouds and vapours, that were borrowing brilliancy of varied coloured apparel from the great company to whose court they were flocking. Her eyes drank it all in and her soul was filled with the delight of it. She stood motionless.

Nor did she start and move when she heard a voice near her, a mellow, deep voice, dwelling upon

each beauty of form and colour that her eyes were drinking in. The voice, the clear enunciation of beautiful English words, the rhythm of the sentences, and the sincere tone of controlled emotion which gave soul to the sound, seemed the lyrical, the musically harmonious, setting to the visual harmony of the scene before her. The details as he enumerated them she had hardly noticed before, the delicate changes in the forms and tints had not struck her as continuous movement, but had been disjointed pictures; and now the details and the changes seemed fixed in repose in a greater harmony, like a poem or a complete composition of music.

She had never heard a voice like that before, she had never been moved by the beauty of a sunset as much as on that evening. She did not turn to see who the speaker was; she felt, she knew, that it could only be that of the young man with the poet's face, and that he could only be talking thus to the lady with the blue eyes and the soft white hair, the only two people among the crowd who could thrill with the beauty of God's great world.

And suddenly the mood snapped. A harsh loud voice with a sharp nasal twang shouted:

"I have just had a talk with the first officer. I'm mighty afraid this weather won't last. There's

mischief in those clouds down there, and we may be in for some pitching and rolling. I hope you're a good sailor, ma'am. Now let's get our dinner while we can keep it. The gong has gonged away a long while."

She turned and recognised as Mr. Beek the man who had disturbed Mrs. Sandeman and Van Zant.

CHAPTER V

BY a curious coincidence Ruth sat in immediate proximity to the Beek party. She had neglected to secure her place at once upon arriving, when there always is a scramble for seats at the captain's table. She was astonished that Mr. Beek had not claimed that honour for himself. But the reason for the choice of his table and the separation and privacy which it gave his party soon became evident. There were rows of long tables, seating each about ten passengers on either side, extending the whole length of the saloon. On the port side the one was headed by the captain; the purser and doctor presided over others, while the starboard side had no presiding officer of the ship.

Here it was that Mr. Beek sat in state. On his right was Mrs. Sandeman, beside her the earnest reader, followed by the elder Miss Beek, while Mrs. Beek sat at her husband's left and Mr. Sandeman between her and the younger Miss Beek. To make it a distinct and compact party an empty space was left which would have seated two or three passengers; and then followed Miss Ward, who had an uninteresting old man, apparently

deaf into the bargain, beside her, followed by a line of other travellers.

Unlike her feelings while walking on deck, she was grateful to find that her immediate neighbour was not talkative and that she could sit without conversing. She was pleased also to be on the side opposite Mrs. Sandeman, for it was a delight to feast her eyes on her placid, motherly countenance. Of course it was also interesting to have her railway travelling companion to look at, though she no longer subjected his face to the same severe analytical scrutiny as in the railway carriage. One thing, however, she did remark as a continuation of her artist's mood: his hair, about which she had wondered when she could only see him with his hat on. It suited the picture exactly —no, not quite—for though it was dark and thick and neatly combed from the parting on the side, it had a beautiful natural wave in it, too soft in character for the severity of the face, and there were streaks of grey which seemed premature.

Even if she had tried not to listen to the conversation of the party near her, she could not have helped overhearing most of what was said; for Mr. Beek spoke in a loud, penetrating voice, and Mrs. Sandeman and the younger man sat sufficiently near. Still every now and again she made

a positive effort not to listen, while throughout she took pains not to manifest any interest in them.

At an early stage of the dinner she heard Mr. Beek addressing the whole party, Van Zant in particular.

"Yes, I have made it all right and cosy. You couldn't be looked after better. Trust Sam Beek for that! I feed the chief steward and the saloon steward and sent a gratuity to the cook, the deck-steward—I don't know who else. There's such a lot of them. But I think it is well-spent money to give something to these people; it oils the machine. And then the poor devils have a hard life and they deserve something for their extra trouble."

"Have you enquired whether the grouse and the fruit have arrived?" asked Mrs. Beek; and then, speaking to Mrs. Sandeman, "Our English friends have been so kind and attentive. The Duke of Hampstead wrote that he had sent some grouse to the steamer for us, and the Earl of Thrapton has sent some of his excellent hothouse fruit. Weren't those wonderful grapes?" she appealed to her eldest daughter.

"I have seen the fruit all placed in the ice-box," her husband assured her. "They look fine. And I have arranged with the cook about

the grouse. There are just a dozen birds; and so I told him to have a couple of grouse for every dinner. That will just about see us through."

"It is a 'brace of grouse,' dear papa," corrected the eldest daughter, "a brace of grouse, a pair of partridges, and a couple of pheasants. Isn't that what they say, Mr. Van Zant?"

Mr. Van Zant did not like being appealed to in this way, and did not wish to correct either of them. "Yes," he said, "I believe they do say a brace of grouse, a brace of partridges and a couple of ducks."

"You won't regret having joined our party, Mr. Van Zant," Mr. Beek nodded to the young man with a wink; "the ladies have delicate appetites at sea and so I've arranged to put some variety into these regulation luncheons on board, and we delicate men can share their diet."

Van Zant looked somewhat uncomfortable, for he thought he felt Ruth's eyes on him, and he said: "Thank you very much; but I have the peculiar taste to like the ordinary fare of the ship, and I prefer to stick to it. I am accustomed to it."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Beek was giving Mrs. Sandeman a rather brilliant and emphatic, though not graphic, account of Upton Castle, the seat of the Duke of Hampstead, and of the great attention

they had received there as well as at Dugmore, the seat of Lord Thrapton, and of the distinguished people they had met. In mentioning some of these she turned to Van Zant. "Do you not know them? You have lived in England some years?"

"Hardly," Van Zant answered. Though he did not mind Mrs. Beek's talking about English peers and was interested in the way the life struck her, he disliked it much for himself. But he was soon forced into embarrassment by that subject. For the younger Miss Beek suddenly clapped her hands and said in manifest delight and excitement to her sister:

"I have it now, Julia! You know how we have both been puzzling where we had seen Mr. Van Zant before? Well I know it now. You remember when we were in that lovely little boudoir with the lovely china at Dugmore, and we looked at the photographs standing about the writing tables. Don't you remember?" and she looked with an intent query at her sister.

"I remember that, but what . . ."

"O you goosie! Don't you remember how we asked Lady Mary Mannering who the young man with the French artist's pancake cap was, and she said it was an American friend of theirs. I

remember now it was a Dutch New York name. Why, it was Mr. Van Zant," she laughed in triumphant glee.

"Of course, it was," responded the sister, equally pleased.

Van Zant could not quite hide his embarrassment while he said:

"Lord Sevenoaks, Lord Thrapton's son, and I were together a good deal in England, and we lived in Paris together for some time. It is years since I have been at Dugmore. I like them very much, they are nice people."

Fortunately for him Mr. Beek was then monopolising the conversation, though he was addressing himself chiefly to Mr. Sandeman.

"The Duke of Hampstead is a bright man, and has got a business head on his shoulders. If he lived in America for a few years he would get the hang of it easily. He knows a good deal about railways—not as much as he thinks himself, though. He wanted me to tell him all about the Pan Handle and Omaho Western combine—asked me what I thought of it," and here he gave a chuckle. "I said, 'Just a little more, perhaps, than of the Wyoming Pacific just a few days before it went into the receiver's hands.' That frightened him."

"The reckless way in which these English peo-

ple invest in concerns they know nothing about is astounding," said Mr. Sandeman. Van Zant did not need to feign interest in the business talk of the two older men. He did not only feel that herein Mr. Beek as well as Mr. Sandeman were masters, and had all the dignity in this sphere which mastery of a subject gives, but he had made up his mind to serve his apprenticeship in business and was humbly respectful as a beginner.

"There are enough instances I could tell you of, besides all the money they have put into South American republics. Why, I wouldn't look at most of the trash in our own stuff which they dump on the English market," Mr. Beek said with vivacity, and he began to enumerate a number of striking instances in proof.

"You know the rage for limited stock-companies a few years ago," Mr. Sandeman said in his quiet, clear-cut enunciation. "The English promoters were swarming over the continent ready to secure English capital for any big concern, however shaky it was. One of those fellows came to me about a tin factory down in Pennsylvania in which I am a partner, and made an offer of a large sum which he could raise in England, if we turned it into a company. My answer was that with my cousin and his partner, sharp business

men, who had no other business but to run those works, with a comparatively small and economical staff, the profits would not secure more than five and a half per cent. on half the capital sum of his offer. He asked me what concern that was of mine if he made the offer. My answer to that was that I turned him out at once to find some one else through whom he could despoil his countrymen."

The conversation became confidential between the two older men and was not audible. But Ruth was fascinated into following what Mrs. Sandeman was saying to Van Zant.

"I don't know why," the old lady was saying, "but it disturbs me to see such business eagerness in people of that class in England. It doesn't suit them or they don't seem to do it well. And then they either appear to be half ashamed of it, or their usual bearing and manner seem unsuited to such interests. They can't be easily reconciled."

"That's it, I believe. A feudal atmosphere, pretentions, or even habits, cannot well be harmonised with the Stock Exchange. But more definitely, it appears to me," the young man continued, "that they are not to the (business) manner born. They are in this respect 'bad form.' 'Good form' generally means the rules and conventions established for each walk of life. So there

is also business 'good form,' in which they have not been trained. They wobble about. An amateur, a gentleman horse-dealer, is often far more untrustworthy than his professional colleague, because he knows no rules—not even the tradition of habitual sharpness."

The two older men finished their confidential talk and the chatter became general to the end of the dinner.

The party rose first and began to file out of the door to the companion-way leading to the deck.

Van Zant waited at the door till the others had passed, and then, turning his head, he perceived Ruth behind him. He bowed and made room for her to pass first. Just as she was beside him, the ship gave a sudden and sharp lurch and she was thrown violently against him. As he was turned towards her, her shoulders struck his chest; and she might have fallen, had he not stood firm and quickly passed his left hand round her back and seized her hands with his right. He held her but for one second and smiled at her as he released her when the ship had steadied itself. It was an ordinary attitude into which the lurch had thrown them, less intimate than the position in dancing, still it drove the blood to her cheeks, and she was embarrassed as she thanked him and passed to her cabin.

CHAPTER VI

THE lurch of the *Majestic* which had for a second sent Ruth Ward into the arms of George Van Zant was the signal for two whole troublous and stormy days.

Ruth had intended to go to her cabin merely to take her cloak and rugs on deck with her. But the rolling and pitching of the ship, which was growing more continuous and pronounced with every minute, gave her timely warning and made her wisely decide to go to bed at once and remain there quietly until the sea smoothed down, or for two days, if it continued rough. She had sufficient experience of sea-voyages to recognise the fallacy of the loudly proclaimed remedies of boisterously healthy sailors, who recommended moving about vigorously on deck, eating a "good meal" and drinking champagne and cognac.

Remaining perfectly still she was never a poor sailor, and save for a dull headache, which rarely left her, she almost enjoyed the enforced idleness and repose; while her diminished vitality left her no energy to fret or to grow impatient. When

restlessness came, energy returned, and it was the signal that she could venture on deck.

Thus Ruth did not appear again that evening, nor the whole of the next day and night, while they were passing through rough water.

She lay in the berth of her cabin and at first tried to read. It was not so much the effort which made her desist, as that her own thoughts proved more fascinating than any book. But even these did not keep her awake long. A delicious drowsiness came over her and she gradually dosed off into a heavy sleep, lulled by the gentle swaying of the ship. But before her clear thoughts merged into the full unconsciousness of sleep, she felt as if she were gently slipping to the side, very softly and slowly, and were as gently caught up in the arms of a man; she felt a warm glow creep over her; she almost awoke; and then she saw clearly the face of the young man bending over her, and all merged in the blankness of slumber.

Though the increased rolling of the ship awakened her several times during the night, these intervals must have been so momentary that she did not remember them in the morning, when she was awakened by the stewardess, who enquired whether she could bring her any breakfast. She felt weak and limp, but she was so happy in her

languorous repose that she decided not to risk a change. She persisted in this during the whole day in spite of the persuasive coaxing of the stewardess.

If she enjoyed a delicious languor, on the other hand, her weakness seemed to produce a feverish state in her in which she lost the firm control of her thoughts and moods. Her brain seemed to alternate between a rapid and clear activity of her imagination, and dull and confused vagueness in which the thoughts, scenes and pictures seemed to blend into one another and produce a dim, almost musical mood. Perhaps these vaguer moments were caused by, and corresponded to, the periods of half-slumber; for, though she could hardly remember it, she had fallen fast asleep for considerable periods during the day.

The scenes which individually she thus saw clearly, and which gave vivid tone and colour to her moods, flitted first to her own Boston home: the study of her father, with the dear, gentle old man sitting in his chair with a book, turning his head and smiling with beaming love and joy at her as she entered; then to the drawing-room of her mother, with her two aunts seated peacefully on either side of her mother with needlework in their

hands—absolute peace, mild dignity and benevolence.

And then suddenly her imagination would carry her to a Paris studio, where she saw herself in her long French blouse of blue linen, such as the French artisans and peasants wear, only longer; and her fellow-students painting beside her. She could see herself and her friends as they all sat on their high stools and ate their *goutter* and chattered and chaffed each other, and then examined and criticised each other's work. She recalled how the *grand maître* would come once a week and look over and criticise their drawings. She felt again vividly the stings and vexations, the heart-deadening discouragement, the fainting sense of nausea, which came over her when he was evidently displeased, and began with a distressed and pained expression and voice, as of a child about to burst into a fit of crying: *"mais, ma chère enfant, ne voyez vous pas . . ."* He was always more affectionate and paternal in his language, the less he was pleased with the work. His partial approval was always ushered in by: *"Mais, ma chère amie, il faut tâcher . . ."*; while she was in the seventh heaven when he began, rubbing his hands between his knees as he was seated before her easel, his body bent forward, his legs far apart,

"Mais, ça va mieux, c'est très bien, très bien, mademoiselle;" and she did not mind the *pourtant* which followed, as he looked up at her and a frown succeeded the smile.

She went to that studio at greater intervals now. She had a studio of her own in the Rue Rochechouard on the other side of the river, and here she was queen. Distinguished artists sometimes came and criticised her work. Though she experienced all the painful emotions at their censure, still more when they proved indifferent or gently or flatly and superficially commendatory—a tone which she recognised as suiting the work of amateur friends —she no longer experienced the anguish of her early days at her master's atelier.

And the delightful parties she had in her studio! Her artist friends of various nationalities congregated there, with a sprinkling of girls studying music or acting at the *conservatoire,* with occasional intruders from the *"bourgeois"* people. They gave a touch of the *monde* to the gatherings; but, wisely or forcibly, they had to keep their worldliness in the background, or it was quite merged in the free and easy familiarity and gaiety of the general tone. And there were men, as well as women, of various nationalities, chiefly, however, American and English.

And then, again, she was swayed by the vivid reminiscence of those joyous, delicious parties in the country, to Meudon, to Fontainebleau, where she had passed months in the summer, and had drunk inspiration from the artist associations of the past, as well as from the exquisite beauty of the surrounding nature. And their gatherings, excursions and adventures during their Paris evenings—their escapades! How some of her prim Puritan friends at home would stare in icy consternation if they had gone with them to these most interesting and amusing places, where, after all, there was real life, free from the constraint of deadening conventionalities and hypocritical chains that enslaved the free-born temperament of genius, of all art-productiveness!

And then, suddenly, a cold shudder came over her and the blood seemed to congeal in her heart, as she recalled an experience which had disturbed her peace of mind for days, had made even Paris unattractive and had made her long for her home. It was a shock she experienced but a fortnight ago, when one of her artist friends, a man of some eminence, had accompanied her to her home after one of those escapades, and affronted her. She wished never to see him again; he was hateful to her; nay, the memory was almost as odious as

the presence of that man. And, with an effort, she dispelled the hideous vision.

But the figure which most constantly thrust itself forward in her mind, and blended and intermingled with the scenes she recalled, was that of the young man who had flung the book into the sea. She thought of him clearly in the present as a member of that millionaire party; and curiously enough, it was then with a kind of resentment, almost with animosity. She imagined some act of rudeness on his part or that of one of his companions;—that they had quite underestimated her powers, or her social experience and tact;—and she then imagined striking incidents in which she would put him and them to rights, make them stare in humiliation at the ridiculous figures they would present. She saw herself met at the steamer by her father and his rich New York relative, one of the most prominent men of oldest standing there, driving away in the well-appointed carriage in a quiet and unostentatious, but impressive, manner.

Not only thus did he enter her thoughts. But in the vaguer moments of blended imagery, when the outlines of the present faded into dimmer contours, and all the scenes were interchanged and intermingled as in a musical harmony, he intruded

himself gently, he even took the central place; and then, too, her feelings for him were softer, less combative, in truth, they were those of a dear friend. Still *she* was the superior and leading figure, the Beatrice who led this young Dante through the hazy dreamland of her day-dreams in her half-slumber; she opened his provincial eyes to unknown scenes; she widened his sympathies so that he could see the beauty and nobility of life in its every phase; she unfettered his heart from the cramped chains of a Puritanism which made him tremble at facing truth, and from which, thanks to her own strength of will, she had emancipated herself.

And while she imagined herself painting at her easel, he sat there and watched her, wrapped in the mystery of artistic creation which was being unfolded before his eyes; he was there, impressed and appreciative, as she dispensed joyous and original hospitality in her studio; he was with them on their picnics into the country, their wild and unconventional evenings in Paris—perhaps even at the *Chat noir;* and her presence enabled him to ignore what might have struck him before as bad, forcing him to recognise the great genius of life in every one of even its crudest manifestations. And then the scene itself, the setting of the

picture, vanished, and she saw his grateful face alone. All grew confused and blurred, and a sudden snap or lurch nearly awakened her out of her half-slumber; but it only gave her the vision of an arm and a hand thrust with a shake before her eyes, and a book sailed and glided through the air, with a trembling of its opening leaves, like a wounded bird with fluttering, maimed wings, struggling in the air and dropping into the sea, where it vanished forever.

CHAPTER VII

VAN ZANT, too, suffered from the discomfort of the bad weather. It was too "dirty" to make it possible to sit out on deck or even to walk much. Though he was not a bad sailor, his head and eyes were affected, and he could not read for any length of time with comfort and pleasure.

Even if this had not been so, he found it difficult to select a sheltered and quiet place. The ladies' room was stuffy and disagreeable; and the company in the smoking-room, with its aggressive loudness, made it impossible for quiet people to read or talk in peace. The effect of a rough sea on his nerves was to make them acutely sensitive to the loudness and vulgarity of typical ocean travellers. He was vexed by the selling of pools in the smoking-room (an ideally fitted smoking-room the *Majestic* had and one in which he would have loved to have settled down), with the cheap wit of the amateur auctioneer, backed by the poker players, who seemed to claim the best seats by right of gambling prescription, with the players in shirt sleeves, and those who had their coats on but talked Shirt-Sleevonic. The conversation

about him invariably turned on the "run," leading to a comparison of the respective merits of ocean steamers (always to the disadvantage of the one they happened to be on), complaints of food and service, violent standing up in partisan loyalty for the ship of preference, nearly leading to open quarrels. This topic of conversation made way for talks on European travel, beginning with compassionate derogation of the arrangements for baggage and the absence of the check system; the inconvenience of the railway carriages; the comparative merits and faults of the large hotels in the various capitals, always, of course, measured by the standards of American hotels. All this was discussed with an emphatic intensity, sometimes even a passion, as if it concerned the honour of their immediate families. The highest intellectual flight which such conversation reached, and in which it nearly always culminated, consisted of crude, dogmatic generalisations on national characteristics and institutions of the several European countries, always with an implied or expressed final estimate from standards of equally puerile generalisation on America's nation and society.

He prowled about like a wounded animal to find a place where he was free from the nauseous savagery of that fiercest of social animals who

"Was cast for the common or usual pig
And has turned the invincible bore."

With characteristic hastiness, under the influence of his present experience, he felt serious misgivings as to the rightness of the course he had cut out for himself. Was he really fitted for American business life? Would he not prove a failure?

George Van Zant was the second son of a wealthy merchant who, besides the valuable property he possessed in New York City, had founded the largest silk works in the Eastern States. This factory had been turned into a limited company a few years ago, when his father had retired from business. George's elder brother was the business manager there now; and after due deliberation, George himself had decided to join him as manufacturing manager and to make this his chief vocation in life. The step had been a deliberate one and had required, not only considerable thought and discussion, but also long and thorough preparation. The preliminary steps had now all been taken, and he was on his way to America to enter upon his serious duties. It meant an abrupt and radical change in the life to which he had been accustomed for the last ten years.

His life had been a very full one; full of sensations and experiences of all kinds; and his wander years, his period of "storm and stress," had been so literally, and had lasted a long time. When, at the age of twenty-three, he had graduated from Harvard and had left for Europe, his father had given him *carte blanche* to do what he pleased for ten years, and to decide upon his own walk of life, untrammelled by any material considerations or duties to his family. The only condition imposed was that, after ten years, he must settle down to some definite vocation, even if it were that of a *professional* gamekeeper.

He had accordingly sailed for Europe well provided with an expansive letter of credit, a packet of letters to a large and diversified number of prominent and interesting people in all the European capitals, as well as an inexhaustible fund of emotional energy, an unquenchable thirst for new information and sensations, unbounded, yet undefined, aspirations—in which, however, the idealistic predominated—and a native self-control which, though pushed into the almost invisible background for shorter or longer periods, ultimately always gained the day and led him back to the paths of principle and sobriety, traditional or hereditary in his family and in the society in which

he was reared. The former outfit opened the doors of the "world" to him, the latter brought him face to face with the other spheres of society and kept him for the greater part of this period in the international provinces of "Bohemia."

After nearly two years spent in England, devoted entirely to sports, in which he had excelled as an undergraduate, with much hunting and shooting and staying at country houses, and two seasons of gaieties in London, he turned his back on "society." With the same will and energy which he brought into sport and athletics, he turned to the study of painting in the Paris studios and revelled in the society of the Latin Quarter, draining the cup of its half-fermented wine down to the very dregs and, as was but natural, frequently suffering, both physically and morally, in consequence from the after effects of such an unhealthy beverage. For four years, with a good deal of holiday travelling in between and occasional relapses into the "world," he remained hard at work in his Paris studios. Then suddenly he relinquished this vocation, though his fondness for art remained, and though he carried on his painting, now confined to landscapes, with the love and enjoyment of a real recreation.

His friends were astonished at this sudden aban-

donment of the career of art; for he had twice succeeded in getting a picture into the *salon,* and he was well spoken of. But his desultory reading of general literature, more especially on philosophical subjects and the works on social and economical questions, with many a day's talk with thoughtful and even eminent men of letters and action, strengthened the serious and self-questioning strain in him, and made him sooner or later pause and ask himself whether he had really found the right thing to do. At this somewhat advanced stage in his artistic training he realised clearly that he would probably never succeed in being a truly great artist, and nothing less than this would satisfy him.

At the same time his practical and active temperament made him flee from the purely theoretical life of a student. He desired to carry thought into life and to see the working of principles in flesh and blood among his fellow-beings. Accordingly he returned to London and threw himself with enthusiasm into work in the East End. He lived at Toynbee Hall and similar "missionary" institutions, mingled with the people, and gave up both his "Bohemian" and "worldly" habits.

But, after nearly three more years of such work, he turned his back on it with thorough deliberation.

Besides feeling grave doubts from a more theoretical and ultimate view of their effects, politically, socially and economically, he doubted even of their immediate effectiveness, both as regards the denizens of the East End, as well as upon the enthusiastic "missionaries" themselves, whether from the West or the West centre. To begin with, perhaps because he was an American, he did not believe that there really existed "classes" even in England—at least for purposes of definite action—based upon their more fixed and tangible distinctness. Nor was it in any way desirable to make them fixed. The attempt to "bring them together" often came dangerously near to confirming, or even creating, the consciousness of their distinctness; while it really seemed to him a most fluctuating idea. In our unfeudal days "class" seemed to him to depend chiefly upon vocation in adult life and the preceding education. Changing these underlying causes of distinction would invariably and forcibly change social tastes and forms. The attempt at changing such tastes and forms by themselves was likely to lead to insincerity, and was not conducive to happiness. The real changes, he put it epigrammatically, depended upon the schoolmaster and the employer.

And as for the people who did this East End

work, though, as a temporary training, he thought it might do good to some who by nature, tradition and habit were worldly and selfish, these were rarely the people who took to such work sincerely and deeply; while the others were often morally emasculated by its dangerously inebriating spirit of moral exaltation. He found that a large number were deceived into self-indulgence and moral cowardice, in avoiding and shirking the sobriety and arduous discipline and self-repression of the established natural tasks, evolved by organised society in the normal centres into which they were born—study and *systematic* self-improvement, business, professional careers and home tasks.

He turned his back upon the East End and wandered about the world. And now began the unhappiest period of his life: self-questioning, search after real tasks, with the vicious circle of decreased intellectual and moral vitality; frequent periods of paralysis of the will, growing bluntness of interest and of the faculty of being pleased, nay, of interest in his fellow-men and—fellow-women.

He had led a not "irreproachable" life in the past. He had had many a love-affair. But his views and principles had for some time been fixed, and he lived up to them. He was chiefly guided by what in this respect he called moral good taste and

cleanliness. Three times he had been on the verge of marriage; and though he did not regret that these serious attachments had come to nought, however much real distress he had experienced at the time, he did not purchase his peaceful retrospect and congratulation at the expense of depreciating the character and charms of those who had thus once attracted him. He had lived through the scepticism concerning marriage as a social institution and had been a temporary adherent to several wild theories to replace it. But he had now gained the firm conviction that, however faulty were the conventions surrounding the life of adults preceding marriage, or that of people determined to remain single, and however great the changes which would have to be introduced into the views and customs concerning these—marriage was still the noblest and best institution invented by the moral genius of man. Only he felt convinced that love in its full and most varied meanings was essential to it; but of equal importance was the consensus of well-balanced judgment and thought to confirm the divine and highest instincts of the world. He had a pet phrase for any intimate friend who upbraided him upon his bachelorhood: "I *cannot* marry with my head alone, and I *dare not* marry with my heart alone."

He was essentially not unreligious, but was decidedly unsectarian.

Even with this mature development in his soul's growth and the general decision it gave to his views of life, he could not escape from the misery of the restless and still inactive interval after he had given up the East End. It marked the end of his *Lehr* and *Wander-jahre* and he was working into his *Meister-jahre*. And this transition is always fraught with self-torture or with melancholy for serious natures.

Fortunately he was not left to fight it all out by himself, and in himself. Help came from without and from a most natural quarter, nearest to him—from his father. He had been with his parents at a watering-place in Germany two years ago, and, without in any way commenting upon his unsatisfactory condition, which his mother had at once detected, or the approach of the ultimate period for the choice of a vocation, his father began to lay before him the state of business and the opening there was there for him.

Though the silk works were now in the hands of a stock company, his father and his family held the chief interest in the business, and they were dissatisfied with its working, owing to deficient management. The business department was well

looked after under the efficient control of George's elder brother; the technical and manufacturing department was lagging behind the times and was wanting in intelligent management, notably in the infusion of taste in the department of designing.

Like a flash of inspiration George saw "the thing to do for his hand" and he at once determined to "do it with his might."

He said nothing to his father that day; but the next day he laid before him the plan he had settled upon, and he had the pleasure of witnessing the joyful and grateful elation of his habitually undemonstrative parent.

This plan he carried out religiously. He went for two years to the "Weavers' College" at Chemnitz in Saxony; and while there he read a good deal on decorative art and collected a valuable library on this interesting topic. He made himself master of the whole art of weaving. Then he spent some time at Lyons, Crefeld and Macclesfield, inspecting and examining, as far as he was able to do this, after candidly stating his aims and purpose to the owners of the factories, the large silk works of these centres of industry.

He now looked at his duties with clearness and sobriety, though without relinquishing the higher ideals of life even as a manufacturer. He knew

that the first and immediate aim was to make the business pay, and therefore to supply the existing demand as cheaply as possible. To do this he hoped to introduce some modern technical improvements. But at the same time his artistic taste and attainments were to stand him in good stead in improving the quality and standard of designs; and he fondly hoped that he could also effect and modify the demand by the artistic designs which he would make for silk-weaving. And finally he cherished the fond hope that, without manifest patronage or interference, he would be able to affect the moral and physical welfare of their numerous factory hands, to lead them, in joining them, in amusement and education.

He was now enjoying a secure and settled happiness of soul compared with which the wild delight of his Latin Quarter days was almost like pain.

With the thought of the new life he was to lead, came the thought of the people he would have to associate with, and the danger which came from his fastidiousness in this respect. Mrs. Sandeman had delicately given him to understand that he had been judging the Beeks too summarily, and was not treating them considerately. As a matter of fact, Mr. Sandeman had told his wife that "that

young man will never get on in America if he treats all people as he treats Mr. Beek."

So now he determined to follow their repeated invitation and to call on the Beeks in their sumptuous private sitting-room.

He found the whole family enjoying perfect immunity from seasickness. The father and mother were playing at piquet, the girls were listlessly reading novels. All seemed relieved and well pleased with the visit of the young man. There was a heartiness in their greeting and a homelike atmosphere even in this ship's cabin, to which perhaps the previous musings of the young man made him sensible. His own manner, too, was warmer and free from constraint, and so he drew an amiable response to his own pleased advances.

His hour's visit showed him the robust business man in a much softer and an almost beautiful light, as the affectionate and considerate husband and the absolutely devoted father, like soft clay in the hands of his two girls. These girls too were good, simple, healthy creatures, with a fund of common sense, high spirits and decided humour. He thought that a very short training, a life amid other associations with the realisation of refined interests, would fit them for many a brilliant circle.

But he rightly concluded that, by nature and training, they were best suited to be the admirable wives of active men of business and the mothers of healthy and law-abiding citizens, in homes where comfort and affluence helped their kind hearts to dispense warm and cheery hospitality.

As he walked to and fro on deck after he had left them, in spite of the rough windy weather, he felt cheered by the fresh air, and his thoughts reverted, as by contrast, to the girl whom he had saved from falling the previous evening. She was certainly a different type, a beautiful girl! He wondered who she was. He must get to know her. And she occupied his thoughts while he walked to and fro for some time after.

CHAPTER VIII

ON the third day of their voyage from Queenstown the dirty weather had cleared off; and though in the morning the ship was still rolling considerably, the wind had abated, the sky was brighter, and there was every promise of a warm and cheery day.

Even at an early hour several ladies who had reappeared on deck were seated in their steamer chairs, which were lashed to the handrail along the deck-cabins. Ruth, though she could barely drink a cup of tea and felt faint and drowsy, was helped up on deck by the stewardess, placed comfortably in her chair, and wrapped up in her rugs. As she lay there, refreshed by the breeze fanning and bathing her face with cooling caresses, half asleep, with her eyes closed, she felt her strength and activity return rapidly with every minute. She enjoyed the strange languor which held her whole body in will-less surrender, and was almost displeased to feel the pulse of life and action gradually assert itself.

George Van Zant found her lying thus stretched

out, apparently in peaceful slumber, as he passed. There was a sculpturesque repose in her pale face, with the closed, beautifully chiselled eyelids, and an expression of painless suffering, or rather, as if pain had passed gently and had gently touched her brow as with silent wing it had flown by. There was a poetic tone to the mood which the sight of her face evoked, but chiefly one which called upon pity and all the strong tenderness of the true man in him.

He wanted to turn back at once to have another look; but there was something which checked him, a feeling of delicacy to her, and, perhaps, an unconscious sense of foresight and caution which had taught him that the most delicate and noble sensations must not be robbed of a certain mystery and coarsened by too much clearness and repetition. So he continued his walk on the other side of the deck for a considerable time, dwelling upon the sweet image which his eyes had just perceived and giving himself up to a sentiment, nay, a sentimentality, which he had not experienced for a long time.

The passengers now appeared on deck in greater numbers, and a more active movement and chatter dispelled his contemplative mood, favoured before by the stillness and emptiness of the

deck. The dreams left him, and he now ventured to go to the lee side, where most of the promenaders—nearly all men—were walking.

As he approached Ruth, he saw that her eyes were still closed and that she was still slumbering, and the same manly tenderness again began to steal over him. But suddenly, as his eyes left her face, there was an abrupt change in his mood.

The wind, and perhaps a change of position on her part as she was sleeping, had caused the rugs to unfold from her feet, and a sudden gust must have flapped the lower end over the one side; her dress had tucked up, and, as she lay there helpless, she displayed a good deal of black silk stocking, tightly fitting in foldless smoothness a beautifully shaped ankle.

When the young man had passed her, a strange sense of uneasiness, a *trouble* came over him, out of all proportion to the trifling nature of the incident. No doubt, in sympathy with the girl, he felt something of the shame which his own disturbed feelings would have evoked in her, had she known of them. And when he heard two smoking-room men (one of them the witty pool-auctioneer) chuckling behind him, make a broad remark of commendation, and halting, he caught the expression on their amused faces, he wheeled

round and walked quickly to the chair of the girl, and very gently and silently pulled her dress over her ankles and wrapped the rugs round her feet with caution. Though he avoided looking up at her face, a rapid glance at her before he left hastily, though noiselessly, reassured him that she had not wakened out of her slumber.

As a matter of fact Ruth had not been asleep all the time she had been on deck, but she could not open her eyes. Once or twice she had drawn her lids up the least bit, and had seen Van Zant pass the first time. She was enjoying that will-less, listless fatigue which those know who have recovered from a severe illness, and she could not, even if she had so willed, shake off this lethargy. She thought her rugs had become disarranged, and felt a coolness about her ankles, and her uneasiness began to interfere with the delicious mood which held her. If only she could find enough energy to lean forward and pull the rugs over her feet, with which she could have held them down. But she seemed powerless. If only the stewardess would come! She had promised to look after her at intervals. She thought of begging some passer-by to send for her, but she could not bring herself to do even this. Her eyes remained closed, and the upper part of her body refused to move for-

ward. Besides, the stewardess would surely come every moment! Just then she thought she heard the laugh of the two men and vaguely felt she might be the cause of it. And then she felt her dress being gently, gently pulled down and her rugs being arranged under her feet. She opened her lids slightly and saw Van Zant with set and unmoved, even stern features, as he bent down over her feet.

A thrill shot through her whole body, and as he moved away silently there was a conflict of various emotions in her heart: shame welling over into gratitude, irritation and anger with herself and against those who may have laughed at her, dissolving into a joyous outpouring of her soul to this stranger. There was no depth or deliberation in it; but it was as if she had sat with a girl friend and had seen a man do what she liked most and she had said: "I like that man."

Her eyes were now wide open and the lethargy left her, and gradually her normal energy returned.

Van Zant sat at the stern watching the waves churned up by the screws, dreaming for nearly an hour. He hardly perceived how the waves over the sea grew smaller and smaller until the ship steamed along in perfectly smooth water. It was

the bright sun shining on his head which made him seek shelter under the awnings, which had meanwhile been spread over the deck, and then he found and realised in himself that it was luncheon time.

As by magic the ship, which had appeared almost deserted on the previous day, awoke to a scene of life and bustle, when, with perfectly smooth sea and delicious weather, nearly every passenger left the cabin for the deck during the afternoon. The steamer chairs were crowded together side by side on every available space, and the passage way for the promenaders was often impeded.

Van Zant was threading his way through this labyrinth of chairs, looking for Mrs. Sandeman, when he perceived her beckoning to him at some distance; and, approaching her, saw Ruth sitting beside her.

The elder lady at once presented him to Miss Ruth Ward of Boston.

"Just fancy!" said Mrs. Sandeman, "Miss Ward and I ought to be old friends. I knew her mother, Grace Forbes, before she married."

And she told him that she knew all about her family in Boston, that Ruth had been studying art in Paris for the last two years, and was now

on her way home to visit her parents for a few months. Ruth's face gained a new life of varied expression when animated in conversation; there was a brightness in the eye and a mobility about the mouth, with its pearly white teeth, which caused all the traces of wornness, which Van Zant had noticed in the railway carriage, to vanish completely. Her voice was soft and clear, with a Bostonian precision of enunciation which harmonised with the refined and correct choice of words, testifying to lettered traditions in her surroundings.

To Van Zant the touchstone showing in people cultivated surroundings was the variety and nicety of adjectives and adverbs they used, especially those of commendation or disapproval. The narrowness of thought, and often of feeling, were indicated by the subjective limitation of such adjectives. The least developed minds in this respect merely knew of "nice" and "nasty"; others had a greater variety, but the same term had to do service to cover a multitude of attributes in the objects. The only purpose which seemed to actuate the speaker in his selection, was the expression of his own approval or dissent, and words to him were only symbolical of personal emotions.

What pleased him most in Ruth was her

deferential and reservedly affectionate manner to the elder lady. He could see at once that they liked each other. And he liked them both—much.

When he had talked to them for some time, standing before them, and was just thinking that he ought now to leave, Mrs. Sandeman rose from her chair, and begged him to occupy it for her, while she looked after Mr. Sandeman, whom she had promised to join in their cabin.

And now a strange thing happened to Ruth. The moment the gentle and kind old lady had spoken to her and the few words exchanged had led to an immediate mutual understanding, and the drawing of their chairs together, so that they at once glided into the familiar talk in which Van Zant found them engaged, Ruth knew that she would soon make the acquaintance of this man, who had stirred her nature to its very depths. While she was conversing with Mrs. Sandeman she arranged in her mind with some deliberateness the kind of things she would like to say without in any way allowing him to become aware of her previous notice of him. In fact, she determined not to allude to their railway journey from London. Her natural desire was to meet him with unfeigned affability, but with the main-

tenance of proper reserve and all the dignity she possessed.

The moment Mrs. Sandeman had left them, however, an awkward pause ensued, which grew uncomfortable from its length; and then it was that her whole manner seemed to change against her will. With a tone and expression of archness, not at all characteristic of her, in fact, quite foreign to her, she turned to him, and, with a smile of quizzing enquiry in her eyes, she said:

"I have an impertinent question to ask you, Mr. Van Zant. Don't answer if you don't want to."

"You could ask no question, I am sure, which I should not be well pleased to answer."

The pleasant and candid, yet serious, manner of the young man, made her draw back for a moment. Her own instincts, her whole nature, were entirely opposed to what she was saying, and his manner to her would make the tone of her question almost grotesquely incongruous. But perhaps this very incongruity seemed to urge her on and caused her to override the resisting impulse of her own nature, and, with manifestly forced calm and levity she said:

"What was the book you threw into the sea?"

The moment she had uttered this, her senses seemed morbidly alive to every impression. She

saw him start as if he had been stung. He looked away for a breathing space or two, as if he were considering what the book was, and then he turned upon her, and looked her full in the eyes, while his altered tone was that of familiar badinage and jesting patronage:

"My dear young lady, I cannot risk telling you that yet, there are too many people about to tell you my secrets. I also know you are a bad sailor, and have but just recovered from that horrible disease. That book nearly made me seasick."

The colour left Ruth's face under the eyes of Van Zant; she looked petrified. As his eyes were fixed on hers she seemed unable to avoid his stare. He saw her paleness grow and he feared she would faint.

Ruth in her weak state did feel faint. When she had uttered the words and when his gaze turned towards her, she felt a glow of shame thrill through her whole frame with anger at herself and at him; this was rapidly followed by a trance-like weakness in which the sensation she had experienced on that horrible evening in Paris returned; yet there was no disgust and revulsion against the man as there had then been—only insufferable disgust with herself; and then she felt quite faint.

Neither of them could have told how long this lasted. But with an effort of will she shook off the numbness which kept her paralysed in speech, and in a halting voice, beneath which tears were audible, she said:

"I don't know why or how I could have said that. It was against my will. Please forget it."

Van Zant at once looked away, and another pause ensued, the length of which they could not estimate. He was even more angry with himself than she was. He had made the gravest mistake. He knew nothing about the girl before, and her remark had made a sudden thought flash through his brain, summarising his early experiences in some American watering place under the term "summer-girl." But if this flashed through his brain, his heart, his feelings really gave him an absolutely different estimate of her. How could he have made such a coarse mistake, and where were all his tact, his judgment, and his refined chivalry? He felt as strongly indignant with himself as if he had struck a woman or a child.

When at last, after the long silence, he looked up at her, his eyes were full of appealing respect and tenderness and his voice conveyed pleading and deferential solicitude, as he said:

"I am sure, Miss Ward, you must be weak and

tired. The sea air is rather too bracing at first. You ought to rest in your cabin a little longer and then try to eat something. Let me help you below."

And he removed her rugs very gently and helped her out of her chair, put her arm in his, and led her, faint as she was, along the deck and down to the saloon, taking off his cap respectfully as he left her.

Ruth had not uttered a word while he led her, but she again felt a thrill of gratitude welling out towards him as she leaned on his arm.

When she arrived in her cabin she sank on her berth and burst into tears.

CHAPTER IX

RUTH did not appear again that day. Van Zant heard from Mrs. Sandeman that she had coaxed her into their private room cabin, where she was looking after her and nursing her back to normal health. She could not say enough of the sweetness and refined good breeding of the girl. The old lady's enthusiasm was the stronger from the habitual reserve of her manner and moderation in expression. In the evening she informed their party that she had won a victory in having persuaded the young lady to join their table, and turning to Mrs. Beek, she said with humorous exultation: "I, too, shall have a daughter with me now." And thus the next day Van Zant found himself placed at luncheon between the elder Miss Beek and Ruth, who sat next to Mrs. Sandeman.

Though most of her remarks were addressed to the old lady, who really treated her like a favourite daughter, Ruth did not neglect the other members of the party. She addressed herself frequently to Mrs. Beek, the young ladies and the two older

men. All these, without exception, she had entirely captivated, and all manifested their submission in their several manners. The young ladies, when she had left, were gushingly enthusiastic about her, the mother considered her a well-behaved, ladylike, superior girl, and Mr. Beek called her a woman of sense who did not put on any airs. But in the whole company one effect was manifest—that they were impressed with a strong feeling of genuine respect. In fact, though there was no discomfort or *gêne* in the tone of the party, an approach to loudness and boisterousness which had occasionally made itself felt at table, subsided entirely, and this effect was especially noticeable in Mr. Beek, who no longer drifted into making his important and successful self the forefront and centre of the party, but seemed quite naturally to take the place proper to him in all but a meeting of the Managing Directors of his railways.

It really was a strange fact that a simple and modest young girl should have produced an effect which neither the superior business capacity and dignity of character in Mr. Sandeman nor the polished strength and refinement of Van Zant could attain.

But her manner to Van Zant was essentially different from what it was to any of the others,

however much she tried not to make any distinction. There was no embarrassment left, especially as his treatment of her was full of gentle consideration and kindness. But there was a warmer glow concealed beneath all her dealings with him, a certain deference, hidden, but there all the same. Above all, there was between them the unpronounced freemasonry of common education, experiences and interests, which naturally drew them to one another more than to the other members of the party and made them understand each other more readily and more fully. Many a remark either of them made to all the party was really meant for the one person alone, and, without acknowledging it to each other or to themselves, they each felt it. With the return of health and high spirits to Ruth, a few walks on deck with Van Zant in the afternoon and in the evening—when they both were pleased to find that they could perceive the sublimity in a great machine of progress, like one of these Atlantic liners, seen on deck in the moonlight—the identification of a few common friends in their homes, there soon was a real tone of fresh, pleasant and warm comradeship between them.

However, in spite of her artistic life and training, Ruth Ward was a New England woman.

She could not live things out, she had first to think them out. And so, when the next morning they had arranged their chairs in a secluded nook, with rugs and books, and a suggestion of permanent settlement, she said to Van Zant in a straightforward and unembarrassed tone:

"If you are not bent upon reading, I should like to talk over a subject with you about which I have been puzzling a good deal and have fancied I had made up my mind. Perhaps you could even help me over some doubts I have been feeling lately."

"I should certainly prefer a talk with you to reading," the young man answered without a trace of compliment. "What is the subject?"

She was evidently struggling to put her question clearly, and then she said:

"Don't you think that one *ought,* no, I mean that one *may* read everything?" In spite of her deliberateness there was a slight tremor in her voice and a remote trace of embarrassment beneath her directness.

The simple and unmoved tone in which he answered must needs have reassured her, as he said:

"No, I distinctly and emphatically do not think so. We neither ought nor need. Of course . . ."

"I ought to tell you at once," she interrupted him with some eagerness, "that I have been

brought up to think that there is no need of restriction, and that I have confirmed my views on this since I have thought and acted for myself."

"Well," he said, "I do not want to gain unfair impressiveness for my opinions when I tell you that I have thought much on this subject and that I formerly held your views and have always practised complete independence of choice. But I have changed my mind, and I now feel quite satisfied on the question. I decidedly think that it is not good for us to read anything and everything."

"But how are you going to decide what is 'good for us?' " she asked. And now the impersonal interest of the talk had already taken hold of her, and they both seemed to plunge into the depths of the problem with a concentration that precluded all levity. "Is the parson or the doctor or the moralist or the artist himself to decide this?" she continued.

"Perhaps each of them or all of them together," he replied. "But we are just trying to decide this for ourselves; and to find the truth we need not subdivide our minds by fixed professional views, or join some clan of thought, or—call each other names. By 'good for us' I don't mean only morally good, but also æsthetically good—what is good for our taste."

"Are they distinct?" she asked.

"Ultimately, certainly not. Perhaps they are even more closely and inseparably interwoven than people admit. But surely you know what I mean when I make the distinction. Practically, morality and good taste . . ."

"Oh! I do know," she put in hastily, "you need not trouble about that."

"Well," he continued, and he pondered for a minute before he proceeded, "what I chiefly mean is that the accent in the 'good for us' is to be put on the 'good for *us*.'"

"I don't quite see what you mean. You must not talk in riddles," she said, after leaning forward and trying to follow his phrase.

"What I mean is quite simple. It depends upon who reads a book or experiences an event, and upon how or in what attitude of mind, we approach them."

"You would carefully select books *pour les jeunes filles,* would you?" she asked, with a protesting irony in her voice.

"Yes, I should," he answered with an amused twinkle. "I should even clap blinkers to your eyes like a shot if I thought you were given to shying," and he laughed at her. And then he continued seriously: "It is not easy to determine the nature

and fitness of the person who is to read, and there are curious distinctions to make here. For instance, a very young and innocent girl may, in one respect, stand on the same platform with a *blasé* old *roué* and man of the world who has seen all that is to be seen of life."

"You evidently like paradoxes," Ruth said, and there was a trace of irritation in her voice.

"No," he answered, "I mean it quite seriously. A young and quite innocent girl reads certain things with her eyes, and perhaps her brain only, and so does the man of the world. But those in between read emotionally, with their hearts and feelings; their reading may enter into their whole system, course through them with the pulsation of their hearts and permanently affect their vital organs, their character, their taste—their whole life."

"And is it an advantage to read without feeling?"

"It decidedly is an advantage not to read certain things emotionally and to be affected by them," he replied. "Take medical books, for instance . . ."

"But we were talking art, general literature, and you are now adducing science—of course there is a difference . . ."

"But that is just what I am driving at, the fundamental distinction between the scientific view of . . ."

"I beg your pardon," she said with some contrition.

"The medical man reads a medical book intellectually, with his brain, with his 'upper consciousness' only, he is fascinated by and concentrated upon the cognitive interest, what there is to *know;* the layman, reading the same book, is attracted or repelled, is fascinated or shocked, is pleased with the satisfaction of a morbid curiosity and at the same time nervously disturbed by the facts brought before him, his imagination translates it all into life, into his own life."

"He suffers all the illnesses he reads of and becomes hypochondriacal," she put in.

"Exactly," he said eagerly. "Because it is all personal to him, because it becomes an emotional experience. It does not only remain in his upper consciousness, it directly stimulates his imagination, through his sensations and emotions, and has become in so far part of his life and character. To become diseased is not necessarily the most desirable state, is it?"

"You need not strike me with a sledge hammer. I grant the undesirability of cultivating disease in

one's self; but need one, in facing a work of art or literature, be affected so immediately in that way? Can't one leave certain things in one's 'upper consciousness' as you call it?"

"No, not in so far as it is distinctively a work of art," Van Zant replied with decision. "A work of science appeals directly and chiefly to our understanding, to our intellect, and it may or may not subsequently stimulate our imagination and emotions; a work of art appeals immediately and above all to our emotions and our sympathies, though it may stimulate our intellect and make us think clearly for a long time."

"Well, may it not be a good thing to make us think in this way, and are there not thoughts worth thinking which we ought to be forced to think out, thoughts, moreover, that can only be conveyed through art or can best be conveyed through it?"

Ruth uttered these words with fervent earnestness, and there was a certain triumph in her voice and manner as she faced her adversary with this thrust.

There was a pause, during which the young man gazed upon her with a look of curious surprise and admiration. Then he stared straight before him with a searching look as he said:

"Ah! you have indeed touched the real problem, one which it is almost impossible to decide in general terms. I was wrong in affirming my point so dogmatically, and I hark back. It is all a question of proportion in each case, of means and ends. But remember, I started with the phrase 'good for *us*' and maintained that it depended upon the reader and his attitude of mind whether a book would do him good or harm. To be more definite, let me give you my personal experience. I have talked over a book like the 'Kreutzer-Sonata,' by Tolstoy, with men and with some older women-friends without any discomfort; but I have felt extremely uncomfortable and did not like them for it, when young unmarried women began to mention it. The book, by a great master, has an extremely moral aim in the mind of the author—though I think its very 'purpose' a fundamental error. Yet, apart from the misguiding effect of its theory, the fact that manifest common knowledge of it with a young lady belonging to the society in which we live makes me uncomfortable, must mean something."

"That may only be peculiar to you and your, perhaps, mistaken attitude towards these young ladies—you may not know the inner life of these girls," Ruth said in a combative tone.

"Very well, I will admit it and drop it. Then I will only speak of myself, and of the inner experiences of that person I have some knowledge. I have not only read a large number of books that young women have not read, but I have also lived a life that young ladies never lead. This latter fact may have blunted my senses. At all events, it has made it difficult for me to be shocked; and I read a great deal with my 'upper consciousness,' which would rouse strong feelings of attraction and revulsion—generally the latter—in most people. I have often been surprised to have my man-friends point to 'strong' passages in a work I have read, the 'strength' of which had entirely escaped me in the interest with which I dwelt upon the story and style, and the purely matter-of-fact, almost scientific, attitude of mind with regard to such 'strong' things. It has also happened to me to be remonstrated with by some older woman-friend for having mentioned, or even recommended, a book to young ladies the 'bold' character of which I had innocently overseen. Now, for instance, there is an author whom I admire greatly, and I read all his works . . ."

He hesitated a moment, as if he were balancing in his mind whether he was to say something or

not, and then he evidently decided not to do it, and continued:

"He is considered by the world, and considers himself, the ultra-realist. Well, I admire him chiefly as a powerful story-teller of the old-fashioned order, and his 'realism' does not move me one way or the other if the interest of his story is sufficiently strong. But, occasionally, the consciousness of his opposition to the 'Philistines' and of his 'literary mission'—I hope no baser consideration—lead him to drag in a realistic and strong situation and say things so brutal and filthy that they shock and disgust me, and I cannot stand it. There are many authors, often with remarkable power of composition and style, who deal with morbid phases of life and taste which I feel it is not good for my imagination to dwell on if I wish to remain a healthy man—a man in the full sense of the term, I mean, not a saint."

"But would you prune away important shoots from the tree of life because your refined tastes are based upon the flower-garden only?" she protested.

"It is not because I want flowers only, but because I don't want rotten fruit," he rejoined.

"But, surely, the Bible, Shakespeare, all great standard works mention things bluntly and

strongly that would shock the sensibilities of refined people if they took them by themselves and in the wrong spirit. Are your nerves as weak as all that?" she insisted, with some vehemence.

"You mistake the kind of thing I am objecting to," he maintained on his part with energy, and his tone grew warmer, more aggressive. "I do not object to the straightforward, even the brutal mention of things that are objectionable in life and that are clearly, or by clear implication, meant as such. There is a good deal of mistaken purism and pruriency in this respect, when people object to books or passages in them because they are plain-spoken though really strong and pure. I am referring to the things that are not brutal, but decidedly morbid; and here again the evil lies in the artistic vitalisation, the dramatic treatment which they receive at the hands of the writer."

"I really cannot follow you," Ruth said, after she had listened to him with searching attention.

"I know I am not clear," he continued with real humility; "but it is not easy to put the distinction clearly. The mere mention of a thing, the plain reference to what is objectionable, appeals to our minds in the same way as a scientific statement. A veiled suggestion already goes further in appealing to our imagination and emotion, it is

more artistic, and therefore also more effective upon our emotional life. But when morbid and objectionable facts in life are imbued by the author with the life of dramatic action, when the scenes and situations appeal to our imagination and our sympathy, when we *live* through all the stages of objectionable life, are moved by the same feelings, stirred by the same passions, affected in the wholeness of our nature by what is admitted in life to be perverse or—even 'unnatural,'—then we come out of such 'artistic' experiences different from what we were before."

There was a pause, during which Ruth sat perfectly still, her arm on her knee and her chin resting in her hand, and then she said without moving.

"I see what you mean now. There is indeed a distinction. But why should we allow it to be harmful? Ought we not to know what the sinner felt in order to forgive him and pity him?"

"Perhaps," he answered. "Meanwhile consider the cost of it. I'll tell you why it is harmful. The more we are moved, the more we are emotional, the more we feel—I mean the less we are purely intellectual, conscious and thinking—the further removed are we from the control of our will. The more rudimentary and powerful our feelings and

emotions are, the less are they subject to our will and reason—the more are they affected by association and habit. Certain scents, certain tastes, affect us in a distinct way and evoke definite associations in our mind, whatever our will or our reason wish us to feel. Our emotional life is a very delicate machine, and is subject to the most astonishing changes through habit and the associations about us. In the lighter spheres I would but remind you of the slavish following of fashions in dress, which our canons of art and our reason oppose, and we still come to like and admire; and in the weightier spheres—well—let me tell you, that there were customs mentioned in biblical life as in conformity with that stage of civilisation which run counter to the fundamental views of modern society. Let me tell you," and he went on hurriedly, "that one of the greatest works of art the world has seen, one of the seven wonders, at which the four greatest sculptors of the age worked in artistic concert, stirred to artistic devotion by a cultured and high-minded woman, was the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, erected by Artemisia in memory of the great King Mausolus, her husband and—her brother."

He stopped abruptly, and there was absolute silence for a minute; and then he continued:

"See by what delicate threads of association and habit, by what golden films, the dearest and deepest, the most fundamental ideas which hold together the moral fabric of our civilised life, hang; remember the power of association, of the direction given to our imagination in our emotional life, upon which our character depends, and you will understand how, even I—with the miserable, sullied soul of an ordinary man, feel the danger of dwelling in morbid atmospheres, why I should deeply deplore the publicity given by the press to aberrations and misfortunes which are only to be met in the spirit in which kind physicians deal with diseases. . . ."

He again checked himself, and this time he felt that his dialectic and enquiring ardour was carrying him too far, and he broke off for good.

During the long silence which followed, Ruth sat deeply moved. And then, with a sigh, she shook off the thoughts that were evidently distressing her, and said in a pained and pleading voice:

"But what are we poor artists, what is the novelist to do, if he does not take Truth as his supreme and safest guide? How can he work if he considers all you say and the grave responsibilities you put upon him?"

"Of course, I don't want the *author* to stunt his creativeness in thinking of all this while he is writing; but I should like the *man,* who precedes the author, out of whom the author grows, to have felt it. Above all, I don't want the author to think of it in his protest against prudishness—which affects the spontaneity of his work as much as does the intrusion of a moral purpose—and I do not believe in making a school which specialises on the lower aspects of life."

"Neither the one nor the other," Ruth put in. And then, looking up, her eyes fixed in the distance, she sat with her hands folded pursuing her thoughts, while Van Zant watched her in silence. "Well," she resumed, as if summing up her thoughts aloud, "I can quite see what some of the prudish moralists would make of Shakespeare's subjects if they got hold of them. But it has just flashed through my mind that I have seen 'Hamlet' from my childhood upwards; and though I understood every scene, I never dwelt in my mind upon the horror of the events which threw Hamlet into that tragic situation. It is his figure and his inner and outer struggles that at once, and almost exclusively, engross the attention and evoke sympathy—and the rest goes to the background. It occurs to me," and her eyes, before widely open,

closed partially with a concentrated look of thought, "that if one of the modern 'realists,' whom you disagree with, had before him that story from the court of Denmark, he would probably have dwelt and enlarged upon the part preceding Hamlet's melancholy—the tragedy of his father's life and death in all its details—and would have made that the central point of the tragedy. Does not that illustrate what you mean when you say that it is the man behind the artist?"

The effect of her words upon Van Zant was deep. "May I be personal for once, Miss Ward?" he asked humbly. "There is nothing I love more in an argument than to have my so-called opponent help me with the best point in my favour, and recognise that a conversation is never a lawsuit, but a combined effort to solve a problem and to gain light. Your instance has helped me to understand what I am aiming at more than anything I could have said. In the hands of a Shakespeare, whose great art never smothers his great humanity—nay is fed by and feeds it—the tragic events preceding the action in the play lend their awful pathos and big misery to increase the tragic element in the personality of Hamlet. They are thus freed from their inherent repulsive horror; they also are made tragic. We know the facts clearly;

but we recognise them through our 'upper consciousness'; we are not forced to live through them emotionally in all their sordid and lowering details; they are merged in the personality of Hamlet—the artistic centre to the living tragedy—and in him we live through a tragic life, purified and ennobled in us by fear and pity. And remember we live through *that* life emotionally (not with our 'upper consciousness' only); and we are not only widened in our sympathies, but deepened and strengthened in our feelings and elevated in our thought by a true work of art. Even the ancient Greeks—the artists who were most purely artistic—realised this, in theory with Aristotle, and in practice with nearly all their great dramatists: The Agamemnon begins with the return of the husband, the stories of Œdipus, of Phædra, of Electra, all follow the same course. It is, as you say, our modern misguided realist who would force us, by all the art or tricks of his craft, to live through the sordid details of the immoral situation—not with our minds only, but with our heart and our senses as well."

"Still," Ruth said, and shook her head, while doubt seemed to battle with dejection in her expression, "why should not the artist ignore the moral or the immoral, and simply be true to life?

Let him go straight to nature. Truth and nature are after all the only guides."

"I deny that," Van Zant opposed, and again a dispassionate impersonal atmosphere was about them and penetrated the arguments which they pursued with keenness. "I might maintain with equal justification that the whole energies of civilised man are, and have been, directed toward a struggle with 'nature,' the assertion of man's reign over her, and that this is so especially in art."

"Don't you think you would have your hands pretty full with a difficult task?" she asked with a touch of irony.

"Perhaps not more so than you would in defending your thesis," he said with a smile and a nod. "But that would carry us both too far."

"What is to be the artist's guide but Truth to Nature?" she asked.

"Truth to his own artistic feelings, to his unconscious selection and synthesis, to his act of composition, which is the first step in artistic conception and creation. But that does not mean truth to the mere accurate rendering of the nature which *happens to be* before him, which strikes his senses pall mall with the accident of casual perception and vision."

"You are surely exaggerating," Ruth protested; "nobody maintains that the artist is merely to open his eyes and then 'photograph' with colours what he sees. There is, of course, a certain amount of selection, but . . ."

"But that 'selection' and that 'certain amount'" he interrupted her, "are the crucial point in this whole question. 'Paint what you see truthfully,' is a good injunction for a drawing master to give to his class; but it is far from summarising the chief attitude of mind governing the artist who composes a picture. For the question is: What do we *see?* The confusion in criticism is due to the inaccurate use of the word *seeing*. Seeing for the artist does not mean 'to strike the eye,' to stimulate the retina,' it means to perceive and to feel through the perception until a creative mood is awakened. One artist 'sees' through a decorative medium, another through an idea. One painter sees merely through his palette and brush, another through his heart, another through his brain; one only sees and paints, another sees and feels and paints, still another sees and thinks and then paints—and they are all right. The one becomes a colourist, another an impressionist, another a 'subject'-painter, still another a romanticist or classicist, and so on *ad infinitum*. One paints minutely and accurately like

a Van Eyck, with the sublime truthfulness and severity of a noble handicraft; another paints with the passionate Venetian glow and sense of beauty of a Titian; another with the joyous facility and exuberance of a Rubens; another sees and renders nature with an imagination bathed in light and colour like a Turner or with the autumn sentiment of a Millet, the spring-like freshness of a Corot, the weird moods of a Whistler."

"Yes, they are all so different and all so great," Ruth said thoughtfully.

"Well," Van Zant continued, "let me go further and say, that the same objects, the same situations and scenes in life and nature strike the one because of form, mass and line—and he makes a statue; another because of form and colour, light and shade, atmosphere, relation of fore and background—and he paints a picture; another sees the action and movement, the human interest in the thing, the situation or the scene—and he writes a poem or a drama; still another goes deeper into the motives and characters, the education and experiences and surroundings which precede and produce or modify the situations—and he may write a novel. Finally, some merely feel a vague personal mood which fills their souls to overflowing and they burst forth in melody, musical or lyrical. And al-

ways it is the same object or scene in nature.

"It is the personal equation in the artist which in each case has produced one of the several works of art from the same object. In science we must strive as much as possible to eliminate this personal equation. In art we need not; on the contrary, we must encourage and develop it. We must come to nature, not unprejudiced, as the man of science must needs do; we must come full of prejudice, of one-sidedness derived from our artistic bias; we must bring something with us; and this active, creative side is more to the work of art than nature is. Goethe somewhere writes to Schiller: 'Before I can begin to compose "a musical mood" comes over me.' This is the creative, emotional element of 'harmony,' 'beauty,' 'art,' which welds and fashions the disjointed scraps of nature into a work of art. And the term 'musical' used by Goethe is instructive; because music, being the least imitative of arts, the least bound down to what *you* call truth, is in so far the purest art, is most art. It is this harmonising of the innumerable, often conflicting, elements into unity of conception and composition, this reduction of the accidental license of things in nature, as they are and happen, to an inner law of necessary fit-

ness within the artist's soul, which makes a statue and not a picture, a picture and not a statue, a poem, a song—which makes them all essentially works of art. This the artist brings in himself—and Truth means the truth to this artistic self in its relation to nature, truth to his conception of nature. And then follows the execution of this conception in the material language of each art, which makes others see, not only the things in nature, but the artist's conception of these things."

"But can that important side of the artist's function be taught?" Ruth asked.

"Not readily," the young man continued with warmth. He was evidently giving vent to the expression of thoughts with which he had struggled for years. "Correct drawing and painting from a given model can be taught, and therefore teaching and even criticism push this part of the artist's work into the foreground, and even make it absorb the whole of the artist's function. The only way to teach the other sides of art is by criticism—moreover, *sympathetic* criticism."

"What do you mean by that?" Ruth asked.

"I mean criticism of work in which the standards erected by the artist are for the time being adopted by the critic who acts as teacher; and not

an absolute standard of his own by which all work is measured—this absolute standard being generally nothing more than the narrow compass of his personal predilection.

"To take an absurd, 'sledge-hammer' illustration, let us imagine that a young Van Eyck, or Dürer, were studying in the same studio with a Velasquez and Tintoretto, a Raphael and Correggio with a Rembrandt, a Michael Angelo and Rubens with a Holbein, Memling or Botticelli, a Turner and Claude with a Ruysdael and Hobbema, a Watts and Burne-Jones with a Sargent and Whistler. Now, the ideal teacher (apart from criticism in correct drawing and colouring) would judge and criticise the work of each one of these artists in the spirit of the art manifested in each picture. What really happens is that the teacher is himself, let us say, a votary of the art as practised by Velasquez; and down goes all that is of the Van Eyck, the Botticelli, the Burne-Jones order; and so each standard excludes sympathy with the other. This is not only so with the artist who teaches, where it is intelligible; but with the men whose profession is criticism. After a few technical phrases of the drawing-master order, they also judge by their personal preference, never attempting honestly to put themselves in the place

of the artist and to understand the work before passing judgment upon it."

"Oh, there you are certainly right," assented Ruth with warmth. "But then it is the misfortune of painting that it is so vague and cannot be taught or criticised directly."

"I do not think that it is peculiar to painting. In literature we can teach people English grammar and the correct use of language; but we cannot infuse into them lyrical and poetic inspiration, dramatic imagination, divination of character and life, coupled with the sensuous feeling for language which expresses those subtle workings of the heart and brain to all readers. These are produced by heredity, coupled with the proper general education in school and in life. And yet there is such a thing as genuine literary criticism, sympathetic criticism, however little of it we actually get."

He interrupted himself, and after a moment's thought he continued:

"But we have strayed hopelessly from the main question. I only demurred to your statement that 'Truth' was the only guide for the artist, and that he is to take life as he finds it. I insist upon the importance of selection. Even were I to admit that this selection is to be reduced to a minimum, and that the artist's chief energies are to be di-

rected towards the truthful rendering of what he sees in nature, he must always remember that the artistic rendering itself forms a kind of exaggeration. The art of painting and of sculpture (music and decorative art least, because they deal less with natural objects to be reproduced)—writing and painting of themselves emphasise, and give importance to the thing or event—of themselves they are a kind of idealisation, and as such they alter the proportion of objects, scenes and events in nature and life."

"I half see what you mean, but I do not quite catch it."

"I mean, that the very picking out of one scene from the innumerable scenes before us, one event or action from the unbroken series out of which it arises and into which it flows, does not only give emphasis to such scene or event, but, further, from being made permanent in stone, on canvas, or in print, it is magnified and intensified in its importance. Well, you must also admit that, especially from the artistic point of viewing life, all things are not equally important. There are things which we all admit are monumentally weighty and lasting, and others trivial and evanescent. You would not make a colossal bronze statue thirty feet high of a nigger-baby with a deformed hand and arm

rubbing its nose, or a great wall-painting of a flea?"

"There's your sledge-hammer again! I can well conceive making a little statuette of the nigger-baby rubbing its nose, though not necessarily with a deformed hand—they might think it was my bad drawing—and I should like to make a careful water-colour drawing of a fly or a lady-bird."

"By Jove! that hits me!" said Van Zant. "I'll drop my sledge-hammer. But let me remind you that in reducing the colossal dimensions, and in omitting the deformed arm, and in making a fly out of the flea, you have conceded my point. You have admitted the varying weightiness of artistic language, and the varying importance of things in nature, and you have entirely cast out what in life we consider 'objectionable' or 'disgusting.' Without using the sledge-hammer, I beg you to consider that I do mean something when I say, that all artistic reproduction of itself increases the importance and weight of what is thus chosen out of the myriad possibilities the artist finds in nature."

"But what is the poor author, the novelist, to do, who deals with life? Is he to follow class standards, those of professions? Is he to consider young girls or children? What is it Goethe says

about giving life in its fulness to the dramatist?" Ruth asked.

"*'Greift nur hinein in's volle Menschenleben*
Wo ihr es packt da ist es interessant.'

Is that the passage you mean?" Van Zant suggested.

"Yes, that's it," Ruth assented.

"Well, he is to follow no authority, he is to grasp life in its fulness! But, surely, Goethe did not mean that the artist was to be like a thoughtless child, putting its hand into a lucky-bag, or a greedy half-animal ferretting in a rubbish-heap with nothing but its nose and its hunger to guide it? Sledge-hammer again, I know," he continued. "But I am impatient with novelists who caricature Goethe's doctrine. I do not think that a man cutting his finger-nails is worthy of much space in print."

"But small things are important in life."

"Cutting finger-nails?"

"Yes, finger-nails may be most important."

"How?"

"Well," she said, "if the author—who knows better than you—thinks it characteristic of a man to care much for the appearance of his hands. I suppose you would not allow him to describe a fop, and only want him to present heroes."

"Now *you* are becoming the village blacksmith, my dear young lady." And they both laughed.

"I know I am," she said. "But you may want shocking——"

"And a shaking?" he added. "Is that what you feel just now?"

"A little." She smiled. Then she continued seriously, "No, really, why should he not dwell on such an act?"

"By all means let him if it is characteristic of the man he is describing. Perhaps a slight mention of it will do. But I doubt whether it is worth a long dramatic description. Why, he may mention it often in connection with that fop. He may use the word finger-nail like a *Leit-motiv* in music, if he be a symbolist. Yet, at best, it is a poor and cheap form of symbolism."

"I really do not know what and who the symbolists are," Ruth said.

"They are artists and literary men who wish to use the ordinary modes of expression in their several arts with the pregnant, veiled, and mysterious meaning not ordinarily in them, and have borrowed this from music. In literature I do not mind that kind of thing in short lyrics; but it is essentially out of place in an art which has to deal with

language, the very essence and soul of which is clearness. Mystery, the emotional pregnancy of meaning, which is one of the elements of poetry, is conveyed in sensuous rhythms, verses, stanzas, complex situations; but it cannot be pinned down to any words tortured out of their ordinary denotation like labels of rare wines clapped on empty bottles. I am out of patience with Ibsen's 'Tower,' with Maeterlinck's 'kisses' and 'tears' that are to mean much more than towers and kisses and tears. I even at times feel angry and *froissé* with the great master, Meredith, when he repeats the 'big drum' and 'beer' in 'Sandra Belloni,' the 'leg' in the 'Egoist,' and something like it in every one of his powerful stories, with an exasperating secret wink of the eye at the reader to mark the humorous pregnancy of the terms. There is a want of moderation and maturity in all this."

"Were not our 'sledge-hammer' and our 'finger-nails' symbolical in that sense?" Ruth asked with a smile. "They were convenient abbreviations for us."

"Yes, they were," he assented. "But would they amuse you if I persisted much longer in repeating them?"

"Decidedly not," she answered, raising her hands in protest.

"But we have rambled away into symbolism," she continued, trying to collect her thoughts. "Yes, there was something . . . what was it I was going to say? Your 'big drum' has beaten it all out of my head."

"Well, we were talking about the unimportant things in life, such as finger-nails," he suggested.

"Exactly. That's it. I want to ask you whether—whether there are not things in life that are unimportant to some people because they have tried hard all their lives to make themselves believe that they are unimportant?"

"Things those people would call 'improper'?" he suggested.

"Perhaps," she answered. "I will tell you what I mean," she continued, after a moment's reflection. "Often, in reading English books, even by great and powerful writers, I feel as if there were something they were holding back, as if they had been influenced too much by the views you have been insisting upon; that those general considerations influenced them in their spontaneous artistic production; that they were afraid, that they were cowards. And then they don't convey their true meaning. I don't understand and feel the life of the characters they are describing. Haven't you often felt it with friends? Don't you know what

I mean? People who pride themselves on their truthfulness and say 'One ought never to say what one does not believe,' at the same time maintain, that 'one need not say all one thinks.' Well, but if you have an intimate friend, and she professes to take you into her full confidence so that you enter into every nook and cranny of her inner and outer life; and still, all the time, there is some important fact or side of her life which she keeps from you, does that not come near lying? Is the picture you have of her a true one, or is it not incomplete or mutilated or even a caricature?"

"Oh, that's true!" Van Zant exclaimed, as he looked up at Ruth, whose cheeks were suffused with colour and whose eyes shone brilliantly with the excitement of what she was saying.

"And there are things," she went on hastily, as if she feared to lose the thread of her thoughts or her own courage—"there are things that are most important to the lives of men and women, about which we have the right to know something, when once the author has taken us so deeply into his confidence that he allows us to think their thoughts when they are alone and forces us into their company when, in life, we should never be there. If he does not tell us of those things too, his picture is incomplete, it is not life at all—it is a lie he is

presenting to us. He has been untrue to his art, to the solemn vow he made when he devoted himself to the service of the Muse—he is a coward. All because he fears the disapproval or censure of the people who are always using the term 'improper,' because they are habitually improper in their own souls." Ruth leaned back exhausted with the effort, but with the glow of satisfaction in her face, as if she had unburdened herself of a weight which was pressing upon her and which she had feared to raise from her shoulders.

"Oh, I agree with you with all my heart," Van Zant said warmly. "Still, I must insist upon the other side. The author need not be an abject slave to narrow tradition; but he need not subscribe to the creed of Mephistopheles:

'Denn was besteht ist werth dass es zu Grunde geht.'

"May not the instinct of an old civilised society be correct when it establishes certain broad rules, though it may have gone too far in their formulation and in insisting upon absolute obedience to them when they have become stereotyped and lifeless? May not society, in establishing these laws, have felt it necessary to protect itself against the destructive forces threatening its very existence? As long as we are what we are, and for consider-

able period, to which we can look forward, the family, for instance, in its deepest and widest significance and with all the ramifications of its influence upon the lives of even unmarried people, is a fundamental social order and we cannot afford to ignore this."

"But would you cut away the ground from under the feet of all reformers and those who have pushed humanity a step ahead in the world's great historical course? How if the author has the very aim of showing that traditions have become too narrow and mechanical and lifeless, to further the *life* which they are to regulate? How if he wishes to show the very struggle against society?"

"You give me timely warning. The essence of Greek tragedy, of all great tragedy, is the struggle of the individual, his interests and passions, against society and its laws and traditions. I should certainly not like to be the purist who would have made it impossible for a Prometheus, an Orestean trilogy, a Phædra to have been written."

"Well, then?" she asked.

"Well, there *is* a difference," he continued, and he was evidently making an effort to establish a nice distinction. "Yes," he said, after a moment's hesitation. "The great tragedian shows the strug-

gle of the individual against society and its laws and thereby establishes and strengthens these laws all the more. At all events, his chief aim in depicting this struggle is to produce his great tragic effect, to evoke the sympathy in the audience, the widening and purification which come from having suffered with others—that is his supreme *artistic* purpose for which he uses revolt against society, and not the exposition and establishment of some new flimsy doctrinaire view of life which is the central aim of many modern novels 'with a purpose.' "

"Are you in principle opposed to a novel with a purpose?" she asked.

"Not as much as most people who use that term as an off-hand symbol of æsthetic condemnation. The word 'purpose' is then generally used in a vague and inaccurate manner and covers a multitude of sins. In one sense every novel, every work of art, has a 'purpose,' some central idea, some cohesive unity of composition which keeps the detached threads of observation and imitative effort together in a compact tissue with recognisable design. But the more this design and purpose become obtrusively manifest in themselves and by themselves, the more does the work of art approach the sphere of science, the less is it a work

of *art*. It ought then to be a scientific essay, not a drama or a story."

"But why should it not be that?" she asked.

"Because it then appeals to our 'upper consciousness' and not to our imagination and emotions—it is not a work of art. I do not want a story to be an ethical treatise, not even on the 'surface' ethics of life. And still less do I want the author to smack his lips loudly and revoltingly over his own superiority and goodness. And when he thinks it needful to herald his work with a long introduction or preface of what he means to do, of the new thing he is doing; when he wants to bully the reader (who knows what he is looking for in a work of art) into reading such stuff in an entirely new way, to perform ablutions in the baths adjoining his ethico-theoretico-artistic sanctuary, before he enters the sacred precincts—then he adds insult to injury, and I drop him as an insufferable prig."

"Why are you so angry with the man who insists upon writing a preface?" she asked. "We may want people to look properly at a new way of putting things, which is not generally admitted or traditional; why should we not help them to see properly?"

"They will find it out for themselves. Art is long."

"And life is short," she threw in.

"Thank heaven for that," he rejoined, "or every raving fad and fashion of the day would last." He paused for a moment, and then he looked up and said with an amused smile: "How curious! we have changed swords. Here are you, the confirmed champion of pure art, of truth in art versus ethics and order, speaking for 'Purpose' and even 'Prefaces'; and I am opposing them. Perhaps, after all, you are at heart a 'Purpose' artist much more than you admit. And it is natural that it should be so. You are after all a New England woman, and that cannot be denied or hidden for long."

She looked vexed, almost angry with him. "I do dislike in argument to have a personal idiosyncrasy thrust at one, as if it affected reasoning, in order that it should weaken one's argument." And then her irritation left her and, inconsequentially, she turned upon him and said: "I might in the same way maintain that you are not quite sincere in your part of the stern moralist."

"Perhaps we are both right in our surmises. We are, perhaps, both of us fighting against what we feel to be the chief bias, the danger in our own

natures; and that therefore we drop into exaggerated support of the other side."

There was an amused smile between them, as if they had both been found out, caught in their self-deception. And then he continued with seriousness:

"Before we break off, there is one point I want to put as clearly and strongly as possible, I really think it is *the* important aspect of the question.

"What I object to in many powerful and prominent modern writers of fiction and their schools, is the *ignoring* of moral law, of the organised order which keeps society together. And I charge them with committing this error not as moralists or immoralists, but as realists who wish to describe life accurately. Now I maintain that, from the point of view of Truth, or realism, this cannot be done. Apart from any moral or educational effect upon their readers, they are not true to life, they are not true realists when they do this. It is essential to human beings that they should be social beings, and it is essential to human action that it is not isolated, that it affects and fits into other action, that it is a part of the ideal moral unity which each successive society in the world's history establishes for itself and forces into the con-

sciousness of every social individual. If a Maupassant in some of his works maintains or implies (and there are scores who swear by his colours) that the supreme, the only aim of the novelist is to represent what strikes him, and moreover what strikes him as 'curious,' 'interesting,' 'picturesque,' or 'grotesque' only because it happens to strike him thus, irrespective of any moral order or law underlying such phenomena or action—the rendering of such human life and action is distorted and caricatured, has lost its organic quality in this unsocial isolation. They may be 'studies' and 'sketches' to hang up in his studio, but they are not pictures. They want the cohesive unity which gives life to the limb, to the arm (finely developed or crippled), however well they are drawn. Now this cohesive element in the novel is the consciousness of moral order which the author must manifest somewhere, to confirm it or to struggle against it, to be put forward—in 'purpose' if you like—or to be kept as a mere undercurrent to the ripples and eddies of the broad human stream as he concentrates his attention upon these very ripples and eddies of the great river. Balzac and Flaubert ('Madame Bovary' is almost a 'novel with a purpose'), the founders, had this; it wanes in Gautier; and the extreme modern realists try design-

edly to avoid it. Their art is in so far *not true,* they are not even true *realists.*"

With this Van Zant arose from his chair and stretched his legs. "Now we must have a little walk. We have been talking a long time. I must have tired you."

"Oh, no," she said earnestly, "I must thank you. I must confess I am quite confused about the whole subject. But I must also confess that you have shaken my former views somewhat. Still, I feel there is a good deal to say on the other side."

"I should think there was!" he said, with a strong emphasis on the last word.

"That is not much of a compliment to me, considering I have been maintaining that side," she said with a smile.

"But I didn't give you a fair chance to get in a word edgewise," he laughed.

"It was not you who asked me for my views. I began by asking you for yours; and I am sincerely grateful to you for what you said."

There was bright good humour between them. They walked up and down briskly and then parted to dress for dinner.

CHAPTER X

THE conversation which the two friends (for such they were rapidly growing to be) held in the afternoon continued to reverberate in their minds for the rest of the evening and kept them both awake; though it affected them in very different ways.

Van Zant, as he walked up and down the deck smoking after dinner, and as he lay in his bed sleepless for several hours, was not at all satisfied with the way he had advocated his side of the question and the general impression which his strictures would produce if they had any effect upon the convictions of his listener.

He was, in fact, playing a part very unusual to him in thus standing up for the conservative, prohibitive and restrictive side in literature. Moreover—and this, perhaps, made him the more uncomfortable—he was conveying to the young lady an entirely false impression of himself, that of a rigorous moralist. And he blushed in the dark when he remembered how different his acts had often been in the past from the general deduction which might be made of his conduct based on the

views and principles of life corresponding to his standards of morality in literature. There was a touch of insincerity and duplicity, a suggestion of "all things to all men" in his several attitudes to various women; and he remembered the general drift of his conversations with some other women in which he had insisted upon the broadest tolerance of things condemned by the social rigourist—nay of frivolity. And he imagined a dispassionate critic comparing the substance and tone of such conversations with those of the talk he had just had.

How came he to insist upon this side with her and to show himself in that light? Was it from sympathy and adaptation to what he half-consciously felt was essential to her character and taste, or from an impulse of opposition tending towards domination? Perhaps both together.

He grew more reconciled to himself and more satisfied with things in general when he had formed the resolve to rectify the untruth on some future occasion, and he determined to show himself in a truer light in telling her something of his past, when opportunity offered. Poor deluded man! Poor white Dove of Spirit, Child of Light, beating its wings against the bars and wires of human language and imagining that it is soaring

far away out of its cage of Self, through the warm atmosphere of earth's wide fields, into the limpid, ethereal clearness above the mountain-tops where Truth dwells eternal! As if talk about one's self, especially when definitely meant to summarise one's whole nature, ever is the truest and most infallable means of enabling others to judge of us truly! It acts like the formal and lengthy explanation and apology for a supposed slight or affront we believe we have inflicted and which the would-be sufferer may hardly have noticed; it exaggerates or coarsens, at least it fixes the act of neglect or offence in the mind of the sufferer; it certainly distorts the sense of proportion for both, and robs intercourse of spontaneity and naturalness.

With this resolve, however, the young man dismissed the disagreeable after-effect of the conversation as regarded his own personality. But for a long time he was moved by a sense of opposition to the views themselves which he had that day advocated so strongly.

He realised with horror the danger to literature and art in England and America if Mrs. Grundy—however high that lady was raised out of her narrow and mean bourgeois surroundings—was confirmed in her sway and actively directed the creative genius of authors and artists. Was

not the aggressive danger to be feared from the opposite camp to the one he had been fortifying? Was he not encouraging the prurient and hypocritical mind of a dominating class which in our times was emasculating literature, strong and true, healthily and broadly outspoken from Shakespeare on through the eighteenth century novelists? As has so often been maintained, was not the all-pervading young-lady-reader of England and America directly or indirectly constraining the novelist, fettering his fancy and gagging his tongue? And may the moral and educational effect not have been, that the "good" and "proper" writers and their readers were made the narrower in their sympathies and views, while the "bad" and "improper" remained unfettered, without moderation in their license, and revelled, dissipating their healthiest mental and moral energies, in the revolt against a stupid and insincere constraint?

Was not the soul-stirring power of really "strong" books, direct in its moral effect, so weighty and all-important, that the vague and distant evils, which he had rightly indicated, become feather-light by contrast in the moral scales? Would it not widen the sympathies and strengthen the heart, even of young ladies, to enter into the life of the mining camp at the hand of Bret Harte, or to realise the

pleasures and pains, the strength and the failings of Tommy Atkins through the powerful presentations of Rudyard Kipling? Was it not a great *moral* lesson, even for a young girl, to have lived through—forced into sympathy and out of selfish, anæmic apathy by the convincing and soul-thrilling power of art—the lives where drunkenness undermined the physical and moral welfare of individuals and communities? Would her heart and mind not come out of a few hours of such sympathy the wider, truer, richer and stronger? Why should she not read "l'Assommoir?" Why should she not, she who only thought of the shops as places where she could buy the finery wherewith to bedeck and adorn her little person, why should she not go through the life-struggle, the ideals, the passions, the joys and tears, the moments of strength and weakness, of the girl in "Au Bonheur des Dames?" Why should not the bridge of literary sympathy lead her for a short time over the gulf that separates her life from that of even a Marion de Lorme and a Dame aux Camelias, or of a lady like Anna Karénina, or of peasant girls like Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Hetty Sorrel, or even of poor servant girls like Esther Waters? Why not understand the natural weakness of a strong man in the "Wages of Sin," and the Bohe-

mian thoughtlessness of life in the "Vie de Bohème" (instead of having it made more palatable and presentable and, therefore, more insidiously immoral in the Belgravian apotheosis of a Trilby)? Nay, even—and here his growing doubts became more obtrusive—why should the same artistic sympathy not lead her to understand how the passionate, and at the same time weak and unbalanced, soul of man may lead him to violent crime, as in "Le Crime et le Châtiment?"

May this not be the supreme and, at the same time, the most direct ethical effect of fiction, with or without a "purpose": to widen the sympathies. They who never have seen life excepting from a narrow window with strong social bars to it, will, untrained and unprepared as they are, stumble upon gross reality in the course of their life, face to face with it, and will then be harmed and permanently unsettled by the brusque shock of reality or its photographic crudeness and vulgarity when it meets their eye in the columns of the daily press. Sympathy then becomes suffering, intellectual altruism becomes selfish attraction or repulsion—the faculties, the very nerves that are affected, are different from those called into play in literature. While literature gives the *catharsis,* the supreme purification of its essence, to whatever it represents by

the higher form and beauty of artistic construction and composition!

May not the final end of such great and strong books, the supreme teaching which their art conveys, be to them that of true Christ-like humanity and charity, which led to those sublime and noble words: "Forgive her, for she has loved much"? May it not teach them to say, as it did Richard Baxter when he saw the criminals led to the gallows, "But for the grace of God, there goes Richard Baxter"?

Ruth also was absorbed by the after-thoughts of the conversation she had had with Van Zant. It had impressed her more than any conversation had done for years. And the impression was gaining in depth and in power the more the actual words were fading from memory. She felt more and more perplexed about the right and wrong of the main question and the immediate drift of each detail; while the total effect upon her mood was one of

unrest and dissatisfaction. It was almost as if one of the main supports upon which she had rested so firmly for years and from which she had contemplated life in general, and her own position and purpose in it, had been removed or made unstable; and this disturbed her equanimity, shook her confidence, and was likely to make her intensely miserable.

And then she asked herself why such a talk should have made so deep an impression. She had heard views of this kind expressed before—often; they were similar to those held by her father. Surely, they were not particularly well put and not strikingly original either in form or substance. It could not have been the commanding personality of the speaker. This she denied emphatically: his presence and manner were far from evoking the respect which was at once called forth by her father. Nor did she approach him with anything like the reverence she felt for her parent. On the contrary, the young man called out in her a certain opposition, if not combativeness. It was strange and inexplicable!

Still there were one or two points new to her, with which he had appealed to her strongly and had set her thoughts running in new channels. And these were of the greatest importance to the

whole question. This was especially so with what he said of the nature of our emotional life, our senses and our imagination: that they were beyond the control of our will and were affected by associations—even in literature.

But had her indiscriminate reading affected her in this way? She could honestly say that it had not. But if it had not, was it not because she was one of the innocent young girls whom he classed with the *blasé* men of the world, as being unaffected because of the great purity, guarded by ignorance of life? This she resented with irritation. And yet, perhaps it was so—yes, it must be so.

And as her clear thought and self-questioning carried her on, she was forced to recognise that there was one side in which her reading had affected her life: it had helped to unfit her for the company of her "natural" friends, those of her own social circle, with whom she had been brought up; it had fostered her discontent with the ordinary life into which she had been born, and had made her impatient of its spirit and tone, of its customs—of the whole of it.

And then a luminous ray of self-analysis was cast over her past, and she asked herself whether she had really read and thought, whether she had approached these works of "art" from the correct,

the truly "artistic" point of view, whether she had received them into the heart of her imagination; or whether her mind, preoccupied by one central idea—which was really self-centred—had not blocked the way to her imagination and her emotions? And this selfish point of view, which had regulated her life and thought for years and had thus really made her unreceptive of the art in fiction, was her own protest against her Puritan surroundings. Was her reading not all affected by a partisan view, practical, *bourgeois?* Did she not see it all through the spectacles of her own strivings? Did she not read them as a loudly professed young Bohemian to find confirmation for the theories of her own life? Did she not pick out of all—even the most "repulsive" sides of it—the theories which would confirm her in the independent life she saw fit to choose for herself?

And then her analysis, by its own weight, pushed further afield, away from herself, into more general application. Suppose a woman read such stories who did not care for her husband or her home life? Would she not also "pick out" that one side and dwell upon it and be confirmed in the "theories" she desired to build up—to form a moral or immoral basis for the desired life of her imagination? Was not the real danger to be

found in the manner in which we approached such reading? After all, *he* had said this, and she only now realised the truth of what he meant:— Whether we read such books as pure literature and art, or as guides to conduct. Moreover, such guides do not clearly appeal to the brain, to be critically weighed as moral injunctions. They are vaguer artistic suggestions insidiously flattering our sympathies and prejudices, and lead us to open out our hearts, our feelings and desires as we live through the scenes and passions depicted with literary power. The result is that we are almost unconsciously affected and guided, because our brain and our thoughts on things moral do not clearly and distinctly regulate and direct our feelings.

She felt bewildered; and again her thoughts turned to the personal reminiscence of the conversation. It was as if the displeasure of bewilderment led her by association of feelings to think of him again. She did not like this disturbing power in him. After all, he was very narrow, as narrow as her father and his friends. He treated her as a child, though he seemed so deferential; and she did not like his tone at all.

He had much to learn still that lay beyond the commercial and financial spheres, and even the

wide literary reading in which he had indulged. How he would be shocked if he knew all she had read and all she had *seen!* He did not know the student's life in the *Quartier Latin;* it would do him good to realise that side of life as well: it would widen him out, broaden his sympathies, supply one side to his fine nature which would make him a perfect specimen of the man of the world.

Then also her sense of truthfulness demanded that he should judge her rightly and that he should know that side of her life—even if she should sink in his estimation. She owed it to him for the kindness and frankness he had shown her. And thus, for personal and impersonal reasons, for herself and his own good, she resolved to bring that lighter, "wickeder" side of life before him.

CHAPTER XI

THUS it was that after the serious conversation the two friends had had, which ought to have put their relation to one another on a solid basis, their talk became for the time being lighter—lighter in substance and lighter in tone—though there was something forced in this lightness.

It was Ruth who led the attack at first. She seized the earliest opportunity of telling him of her work and play in Paris, referred to books, especially "strong" French novels, whenever she could, threw in—though with a somewhat feverish haste and eagerness—accounts of the amusing evenings she and her friends had had, even mentioned a visit to the *Chat Noir*. She was so intent on giving him an account of all this, that she never expected an answer from him and had no attention left to study the impression it produced upon him. This she regretted afterwards; for she would have liked to dwell upon this effect when alone. And then she contrasted the stimulating and interesting life in Paris with the flat and monotonous, *bourgeois* life she had known in America. Here he succeeded in arresting the nervous

flow of her outpouring. He protested that he had known European life for ten years, in all the capitals and in the various layers of their society. And she had to admit to herself that he had had opportunities to study wider circles, though he may not have known her own as intimately.

And then he proceeded to give an eloquent and graphic picture of the cultured and refined society which, years ago, he had met in Boston, and the memory of which stood out brightly whenever he had thought of it abroad. He compared the circles of most refined social intercourse in Europe with those he knew in Boston, and gave, with loving touches of the brush, life and colour to his characterisation: the circle of old gentlemen with whom he had dined at the Thursday Club—men of breeding and refinement coupled with moral elevation, wide and solid culture. They were eloquent and sympathetic talkers, as he imagined the men who grouped round "Athenian Aberdeen" a couple of generations ago, the dilettanti of England, to have been. He had sought those men in vain in the England of to-day, and had generally found their sons and grandsons with coarsened manners talking "horse" and "gun" and often selling the libraries and collections which their ancestors had founded. He remembered the conversa-

tions at luncheons and dinners in Boston where there were ladies, peeresses to those intellectual peers, such as he had never met with in the unprofessional sets of European capitals.

As he spoke Ruth at once became more thoughtful and serious; and there passed before her eyes the vision of her own father and his friends, whom Van Zant had portrayed with masterly skill, composing a beautiful picture from the attraction and charm of which she could not escape. And as it was beginning to lay hold of her, and she felt the freshness and strength of her enthusiasm for the Latin Quarter ebb away, she collected her forces for a renewed attack.

She maintained that what he said might be true as applied to *dilettanti;* but that was just what she complained of; the real, serious and strong professional, the real worker, could not exist, he was stifled in that atmosphere. In her own art, for instance, no painter could be produced there.

Van Zant had some misgivings in meeting this objection by the feeble argument of enumerating individuals; but he mentioned Mrs. Fuller, Hunt, Inness, then Whistler, Sargent, Harrison, and Abbey, as such genuine hard workers and real artists. And though he met her objection that most of these lived and worked in Europe, by

pointing to Mrs. Fuller and Inness as the most truly American, he felt the weakness of his own position. But she did not follow up her own advantage on this point.

"Be that as it may," she said, "I can't find anything to paint in America. The life in the streets, the life in the houses, the dress, the faces, they are all flat and commonplace—at all events, they don't interest *me*."

"And nature?" he asked.

"Nature, also," she continued, "is hard and unpaintable; nothing to catch hold of, no atmosphere, no mystery, no suggestion—it is all there, evident, manifest for everybody to look at, and for nobody to interpret—it is too democratic."

"You are a romanticist," he said calmly.

"How *dare* you call me that!" she said, with indignation. "I despise them."

"I don't," he said, with exasperating calmness. "I don't believe in 'unpaintableness' of certain landscapes and atmospheres (this has been disproved as long ago as when Turner painted), as little as I believe that only picturesque and 'strong' faces make good portraits—as little as I believe that certain things cannot be expressed in words 'though we know them and feel them,' as the schoolboy says. Some are harder and some are

easier to express, and that's where the true artist and writer come in."

"Well, they are too hard for me!" she said with the expression of one who knows too much to think it worth arguing the point.

"That's because you are, curiously enough, a 'classicist' as well as a 'romanticist'—the two things, strange to say, generally go together. 'Harder' and 'easier' generally depend upon the preventions with which the art of the day has led us to regard nature and the methods and 'tricks' with which the school of the day has taught us to express and render them. A 'picturesque' face and scenery are those which, according to the leading artists' methods of painting (which arose to a great extent out of their personal way of seeing and feeling), they naturally chose as most easily and adequately rendered. This then establishes the *Classic*. Then there comes a revolt of the 'new ones,' who in their turn become 'classic.' Thus *plein air* succeeds studio light, impressionism, realism of detail, and so on. It is worth trying the unpicturesque and unpaintable hardness of American landscape now."

"You had better try it," Ruth said, with a sneer in her voice.

"Perhaps I have," he answered calmly; and

there was a pause, before he continued, "I once tried to sketch in Greece. People said the same thing of its scenery and its atmosphere which they say about America. Well, I found it very hard, but I went on trying. I found that I had to cast the atmosphere of Fontainebleau and Yorkshire moors, even of Holland canals, quite out of my mind and eye and—out of my brush. And one day, in one sketch, I thought I had succeeded."

"I should like very much to see the attempt," Ruth said with an incompletely hidden irony in her voice.

"Well, I think I have it in my trunk with a few others, and I'll try and find it. There will be light enough after dinner for me to show it."

Here they dropped the subject. For some time they sat in silence. They were following their own thoughts. A dejection came over her, and she said almost as if talking to herself:

"Oh, how hard it is, even under the most favourable conditions! I sometimes feel like giving it up altogether in despair. After all, I shall never paint properly, and it will only be second-best—if it is that! After I have worked hard and feel elated and satisfied with my endeavour, I see the work of a great master, and I know I shall never

attain such excellence. And then I feel I *must* give it all up. Only the best is really worth doing!

There was a pained expression in her face and deep sadness in her voice.

"There's where I think you and so many others are wrong. What right have you to expect to do the best, to be a Titian or a Velasquez or a Rembrandt or a Turner, who come once in a century? The second-best must never be confounded with the second-rate. Because a man cannot play the violin like Joachim, there is no reason why he should crash his fiddle to pieces or snap his bow. He need only not attempt the Beethoven or Brahms Concerto, which belong to Joachim; but there is many a Schumann Fantasiestück which he can play in his rendering as well as Joachim can."

"Do you really think so?" Ruth asked. There was a pleading eagerness in face and voice, all her superior irony had at once vanished, and she looked gratefully into his eyes. And with this brighter impression, he left her to hunt for his drawings.

CHAPTER XII

IT was their last evening on board, which so often causes even bad sailors, who from the beginning are impatiently looking forward to the end of the voyage, to feel some regret at having to leave the ship with which they have come to terms of armed neutrality bordering upon friendly alliance. This regret is intensified if people have made friends and formed a circle which will be broken up, scattered in all the directions of the compass, when once their feet step on firm land.

With Ruth and Van Zant the idea of a speedy parting came as a painful surprise and disappointment. They had come to drift into daily intercourse so naturally, that it had speedily become a fixed habit. And the other members of the party, no doubt directed in their action by the silent example of Mrs. Sandeman, seemed to take it for granted that the two were meant to be more intimate with each other than with the rest of the party, and they made it easy and natural for them to be alone. The Turks have a phrase which shows a clear perception of the influence of travelling together upon the growth of acquaintance-

ship; if they wish to indicate that they know a man well they say: "Oh, I have travelled with him." The few days which the two travellers had spent together had, in many respects, brought them nearer to one another than years of acquaintanceship under the ordinary conditions of society. They had laid bare to each other, if not their deepest feelings, at least a great deal of their inner and outer life; they had found numerous points of contact in thought and reading and had established that facile natural understanding which paves the way to deepest intimacy and insures its constant supply of mutual confession and understanding. And now this was all to end!

With the feeling of regret at this prospect there also came an impulse of haste, haste not to lose time in these few hours which still remained, a desire to say as much and to be as truthful as possible. They cast off the reserve, the grudging economy of mutual confidence, which a just tact impresses upon us when acquaintanceship has indefinite time for growth. This reserve in the advance of intimacy, which the inexperienced or unrefined do not feel, arises almost out of an artistic prescience, a sense of proportion. It causes us to check the impulse which makes for unreserved intimacy, because we realise that time is required to ensure

a gradual and natural growth of understanding, leading to the climax of friendship; and this climax is then safe from the disastrous effect of a bathos which robs such a soical work of art, such a *genre*-picture which we live and unconsciously compose, of all grace, dignity and lasting harmony. But time was pressing; their departure was at hand, and each felt for the other such great possibilities of friendship.

This was the predominant mood in Ruth as she sat on deck after dinner and waited for Van Zant, who had gone to fetch his drawings. He had, as usual, to hunt to the very bottom of his trunk before he found them. Even if his work was amateurish, as she expected it to be, she no longer felt the prospective pleasure in patronising him and in making him realise the mistake of his slightly presumptuous manner of superiority to her, at least, in the sphere of art. She would pass over it quietly, and then they would have one of their good, friendly talks.

Van Zant arrived on deck with a portfolio, which he proceeded to open.

"I have brought you three or four drawings," he said, "but I want you to examine one of them. It is the only one I am a little proud of, because after repeated attempts in which I was baffled, I

imagine that I at last succeeded in rendering what so many people have said was almost unpaintable. The first three are ordinary studies in England and Scotland, the last is a view taken at Athens, on the south slopes of Lycabettus, taking in a corner of Hymettus on one side, the Acropolis on the other, and a strip of sea with the hills of Ægina."

With this he handed her the four drawings. She took up the first with an expression of calm, sympathetic curiosity; but the moment she looked at it her whole expression changed abruptly; her eyes opened wide with surprise and even wonder, her lips parted, her head and neck remained fixed in the position in which she had first gained sight of the drawing. She had apparently forgotten all about the young man who was seated opposite to her and was eagerly watching her face, flattered and almost elated with the effect his work was producing upon her. Then she stretched out her arm to its furthest length and looked at the drawing with contracted eyes to get the general effect of tone and colour; and then again she held it close to her face to examine the method he had applied in producing the effect. And then with feverish haste she began to examine the other sketches in the same manner. But when she came

to the last her surprise reached its height; she sat rigidly gazing upon it; the widely opened eyes and the parted lips seemed set in trance-like frigidity.

Van Zant had in truth realised in this drawing the one masterpiece of his artistic career. While the others were strong renderings of English Midland and Scotch moorland scenery, with grey sky and clouds, blue haze, strong browns and luminous yellows, of the impressionist order, remarkable, but paralleled by many an artist in France and England—this last drawing of a typical Greek landscape was something quite original. He had succeeded in giving it clear cut, definite, brilliant limpidity and firmness, and had still avoided the hard, sober methods which would have reduced such a picture to the commonplace old-school drawing, to mechanical hardness of texture, of outline and of colour. His impressionist feeling had, on the one hand, enabled him to select the truly essential features from the equable clearness and precision of atmosphere and design; and, on the other hand, it had enabled him to give a warmth of colour and tone and a softness of line to the scenery which acted like the expression of pulsating, almost passionate feeling, cast over, and beaming forth from, the features of a face perfect

in its classic proportions and in the chiselled finish of its every line.

The work in this drawing, giving nobility and life to a scene which in other hands would have been commonplace, came from the individuality of the artist; this had asserted and manifested itself, through all the restraint and convention in the difficulties of technique, as truth to his own feelings and conceptions. He had felt this scene as an artist the first evening on which his eye passed from the purple slopes of Hymettus, over the bay, to the distant hills of Ægina; he allowed himself to be thrilled with all the refinement of design, the variety and strength of the colours which presented so varied a scale of harmonies that no human register could compass all its contrasted tints and shadings. And still it was all harmonised in him as he gazed upon it into one mood, one great feeling. And if it could thus be harmonised in his soul, surely there must be means in his art to mould this variety into artistic unity!

And so he went, evening after evening, gazed and studied, took graphic notes and ventured upon rapid sketches. And then he set to work. He must have made about twenty drawings, which he tore up again. One aspect, one portion of the design, one piece of colour, a part of the sky, seemed true

and correct; but the whole did not *harmonise*. When he looked at it in his room in broad daylight it never succeeded, by the colour and line on the paper, to evoke in him just that completeness of mood which he had felt upon gazing over the plain to sea and mountains as he stood in the evening light at the foot of Hymettus. And this was to him the test of success. Could he force himself while he sat in his room, and then the spectator who was not in Greece, even had never seen that piece of nature, into that very artistic mood which he had felt, truthfully—the truth consisting in the mood, not in the facts and details of outer nature? If he could not do this, he was not the true artist. If art could not compass this task, it had no right to exist among the spiritual efforts of man! Suggestiveness, artistic reticence, were all good and well; but the real work of art expressed fully and convincingly what the artist felt in the fulness and unity of his creative mood; and if his work stimulated several naïve and unpreoccupied people to *different* thoughts and feelings, however beautiful these might be, it was imperfect, incomplete, it was not a masterpiece.

Phidias's Olympian Zeus did not suggest, it expressed, it realised an ideal; it did not merely stimulate the visual imagination of the spectator

to fashion in a day-dream a vision which was evoked by, and reacted upon, the highest religious feelings; but it brought visibly, in material forms, with truth to nature in every detail, so grand and sublime an image, such beauty, grace and harmony of colour and line to the eye, that the actuality before the gaze of each spectator was greater, more supremely beautiful and harmonious in its grandeur, than anything he had ever seen in day-dream or night-dream. It was a revelation, it was something new, before unfelt, which the finer artistic vision and conception, the more subtle and, at the same time, more intense, power of feeling and seeing of the born artist had made real in the material forms of his art by the inspired and patient work of his hands. Thus Quintillian could say of it that "it had *added* something to the received religion."

And so one day, being impregnated and saturated with the forms with which he had fallen in love, yet with which love long and continuous familiarity of every feature and aspect had ennobled passion to the highest worship, he worked on feverishly, his willing hand following like a faithful slave the ardent soul, itself mastered by one passionate idea and desire of artistic contemplation and expression. And when the next day

he looked at his work he smiled upon it and was satisfied. He had never before felt this lofty mood, this elevation as of soaring, and with it that peace and supreme repose of soul. For once he really thought that he was an artist born. But this inspired and joyful contentment of soul never came again in the following years; and he realised that it was but one inspiration, strange and uncommon, to him unfamiliar, yet to the true artist renewed with every visit of the Muse who kissed his brow.

While he gazed upon Ruth, who sat speechless, he suddenly felt the sunshine, the atmosphere, the whole mood of Athens gently creep over him, trance-like; and the joy he had felt at his artistic fulfilment, when he sat that day at Athens in his room and gazed upon the work of his own hands, returned, but all was vague and blended; and Ruth's image, though actually before his eyes, seemed to mingle and blend with the remote mood of Grecian beauty, harmonised with the rosy light of Hellas, reminiscence and reality combined into a new dream-like spell which held him as his eyes were fixed upon that fair woman.

Suddenly, he was recalled to the present by Ruth's voice. Her face, which had been pale, was now suffused with a blush, her eyes were full of an

expression of shame and reproach as she burst forth:

"How cruel of you! How unjust and unkind! You have been wilfully deceiving me in order to humiliate me. Why did you not tell me you were an artist? Look what you have made me feel now, by withholding a truth which amounts to untruthfulness! You have allowed me to talk to you as if I were an artist and as if you were an amateur, and I have innocently been taken in, and have acted and spoken upon this suggestion. And all the time you were *un maître* and I was the student, the beginner. And you knew it all the while, and probably smacked your lips in anticipation of this moment, when you would make me feel a fool and see me humbled and ashamed of myself. Oh! it is cruel!" There was a ring of mortification, almost of tears, in her voice.

Van Zant felt touched with the passionate genuineness of her reproach. It was true that he had modestly forgotten his past as an artist, and had not thought it worth his while, or her interest, to give her an autobiographical sketch. She did not elicit such a confidence, nor had she given him an opportunity of telling her of his claims. She had, as a matter of fact, assumed throughout an implied superiority to him in such matters, which

he did not resent, but which made it difficult for him to define his own position without assertiveness. Still there no doubt had been lurking in him the conviction of his reserve force and superior position, even in the spheres in which she had arrogated supremacy; and this added a certain humorous touch of masculine *bonhomie* to his regard for her. But now the humour had fled, and he felt genuine regret, as well as sympathy with her mortification.

"You wrong me, dear Miss Ward, if you attribute the slightest design to my reticence concerning my past artistic career, for it is past." In explanation of his attitude he gave her a rapid outline of his life since he had left College. And then he continued:

"But I quite understand what you feel and your just indignation with me. There is a phase of silence and reserve which comes dangerously near to insincerity and untruthfulness. I have often felt it in lighter matters when I have been allowed to talk about things and people, others receiving my information in receptive attention, as if it were acceptable information, while all the while they knew much more about the things, and the people were their intimate friends or even relations."

"They buy their dignified appearance of reserve and modesty at the expense of our humiliation," she put in, already disarmed by his candid avowal.

"Quite so," he said; and he went on with serious yet deferential firmness. "I now owe it to you to tell you that I know more about Paris life, of Bohemian life, from every side and in every aspect than you do. I have lived in the Latin Quarter for years, and portions of my life will certainly not bear close scrutiny from people with strict views. I not only know the *Chat noir,* but I have danced at Bullier's in the old days. I have known the women and girls whom you only read about, and whom you would be genuinely shocked to meet and live with in real life. Poor things! the best that can happen to them is to drift back into *bourgeois* routine as soon as possible. If not, they sink low. Or, if *lancées* in the *Quartier Latin,* they may, upon leaving it, advance to the highest mercenary degradation of brilliant success in the high life of the demi-monde. I assure you it is not beautiful nor gay. It is intensely sad or cruelly grotesque. The sooner a man emerges out of that life, the teething and infants' diseases stage of artistic ebullience, into the manhood of creative artistic vigour, the better. For infants' diseases are more fatal when they attack adults.

You can tell me nothing about that life, nothing that appeals to me. If striking and good work emanates from it, it is owing to positive qualities of genius or talent and perseverance in the workers which are strong enough to stand its enervating effect; just as the life of fashionable society need not kill strong artistic powers, though it would weaken the creative temperament in proportion as it engrossed the attention and passion of the worker."

As Ruth listened the sense of humiliation gradually left her, while at the same time her attitude towards him had changed and there was a distinct touch of humility in the tone of her next question.

"I should like to ask you one more personal question," she said. "Why did you, with your great powers, and considering the proficiency you had attained, give up painting?"

And then he told her how the Greek drawing was the only piece of work that had satisfied him. How he realised that he could never aspire to be the master-painter as he conceived him.

"But why," she asked further, "did you encourage me to continue, and be satisfied with second-best work for myself? Is there such a difference between us?"

"Because I am a man and you are a woman,"

he answered with bluntness, after having hesitated to find some mild way of putting a difference which he felt rather than understood.

"But what difference does that make in such a question?" she asked, with a combative ring in her voice.

"A great deal, and a great many differences," he answered quietly. "I cannot undertake to enumerate them all, even if I were able to do so. But, in the first place, you must remember that man is, as yet, the natural breadwinner in the community, and in so far more is expected of him and he must demand more of himself."

"Why so? May not the woman be the breadwinner?"

"Yes, she *may*. But remember I said the 'natural' breadwinner. The cases in which the women are the breadwinners of the family are exceptional, and I am not attempting to account for the exceptional, but simply for the general platform upon which men and women still stand in the eyes of the world."

"Even if I grant you that he is the 'natural breadwinner,' as you call him, how does that affect the question?" she pursued.

"Perhaps you will say, only in a remote manner, but it certainly does. For it is but natural

that the breadwinner, who, from the very outset, faces the world in his struggle for existence or supremacy in work, should take a more concentrated, exclusive, less directly social (if you like to call it so) view of his work and enterprise."

"Does man not always remain a social being, even though he take this view of his profession or vocation; or, at all events, ought he not to remain one?"

"He ought indeed, and that is the ideal. It is all a question of proportion. The question is: What is to be the first, the most engrossing side of our life, to which the others must be subordinated? And in deciding this a man, as well as a woman, must consider the general proportion of life, natural aptitude as well as natural duties—perhaps even the relation between the actual demand and need of such work in the great market of the age and of society—though I think this latter point is difficult to gauge, and is a criterion very dangerous of application."

"What do you mean by your last qualification?" she asked with a puzzled look.

"I mean that if we have satisfied ourselves as to what we can do and practise best, and are clear as to the immediate duties before us, it is not advisable to trouble much about what the world, the

demand of the world's market, requires. For it is almost impossible to estimate such demand (which, moreover, is often created by the very supply offered); and the constant consideration of what the world wants, may finally merely mean "What will tell" and "What will pay?" and this may degrade the worker himself, stunt his moral and creative growth."

"Oh, I understand you now, and I agree with you. But in considering the proportion of life, what is the difference between man and woman?"

"Well, to choose vocations which run counter to 'natural' social and domestic duties we must be very sure of our own aptitude for such vocations and of the relative claim of such duties. In proportion as the vocation runs counter to the ordinary tasks about us, and in proportion as these tasks are just and clamorous, must we be convinced of the aptitude. Now, I maintain that *in general* the natural and just social and domestic demands upon woman are greater than upon man; and she must therefore be surer than he that she has the aptitude of a George Sand or a George Eliot, if she wishes to base her life upon the standards of these great artists, so that nothing less will satisfy her, and anything less produces a

misery and discontent which paralyse her efficiency and sour her temper."

There was a pause in which Ruth was evidently pondering over his words, which applied so directly to her own case. And then he continued:

"You see, in the light of the question we are discussing, there is an important difference in the several classes of work to which we devote our life, and in the various initial prospects with which we approach even these vocations. There are some professions that are in themselves less in consonance with the ordinary routine of social life than others—they are less social, less domestic, they are non-comformist. And in these, again, there are aspects and phases which favour or impair our 'social' qualities, prepare us to respond to the normal demands of the society in which we live, or to lose our 'normality,' to be at war with our environment. Roughly speaking, the vocation of pure Art and Science, which demand the highest concentration upon the work itself, the search of abstract beauty and abstract truth, irrespective of the practical world around us, specialisation of thought and life, isolation of phenomena—these are, in so far, unsocial. Business, politics, the law, and most ordinary occupations, naturally and necessarily bring us into contact with our fellow-

men, their needs and desires, and of themselves force us to consider them at every moment, within our very work, however much we may be engrossed by the work as such, however much we may specialise. He who takes up Art or Science in this light, who nobly wishes to resign a part of the humanity in him, to increase the *humanities* in the world we live in, makes a noble sacrifice, he is one of God's prophets—almost a martyr. But let him go to the stake with his eyes open; and, above all, let him not be a martyr without being a prophet—for this is not noble, it is grotesque."

He paused, and his manner changed as the memory of his past experience came back to him.

"I shall never forget the hours I spent, many years ago, when I was little more than a boy, with a world-reformer, the greatest and boldest, as well as the deepest of the revolutionary theorists in our age. Whether right or wrong, he was a true and noble man, a giant with the simplicity of a child—a true prophet. In a moment of extreme sadness, amid the constant, untiring and arduous labours for his cause, he gave an account of the miseries of his past life. His refined and patient wife had just left the room. She was emaciated and enfeebled by constant struggle, she who had shared all his exiles and direst hardships was now stricken with

a mortal disease. He related how at one time they had suffered from hunger and thirst, not only the misery of exile from their home, but the struggle for the very necessaries of life; so that, while writing his monumental work and refusing all offers of material support on condition of a slight compromise of opinion or conviction, he had lost one of his children from actual starvation. I remember how, boy that I was, I summarised the moral of this sad experience when I left him by the words: "The man who marries an Idea must not marry a woman."

He again paused and looked before him, affected in reverential memory by the image of the lion-like martyr to a great cause passing before his eye. And then he continued with a resentful passion in his voice:

"He was a prophet, there was something sublime in *him!* But the satellites, the intellectual and moral parasites hanging about him and clinging to him, who merely let their wives and children starve without producing the great work, who posed and danced before the mirror of their petty vanity—or, more dangerous still, the concave mirror of a reflecting, though unreflective, passionate mob—giving back to them the image of their puny bodies, and their simian faces in colossal

proportions, it is true, but with all their hideous grotesqueness—there was nothing of the prophet, nothing sublime in them!"

Ruth sat in silence, following every word and every mood evoked by his narrative. And then his voice and manner changed to a softer key as he proceeded:

"Well, I have been taking extreme cases. Let us remember that both in Art and Science we may fulfil the promise that is in us without this martyrdom, when we find that we are not born as prophets. Nay, our work then will be all the better for being cast in its true mould, it will be strengthened by our very normality, as it will melt into inefficiency or grotesqueness when the poor mass of our metal is poured into a mould too wide for our capacities. Even the man with a social mission, instead of aspiring to be a world-reformer, will then, as a simple schoolmaster, a clergyman—if such be his faith—a doctor, or even an ordinary business-man and employer of labour, with widened and charitable views on his interests and duties, fulfil his share in world-reforming. With a little self-repression, and, above all, perseverance of effort, it is much easier to reconcile a great variety of duties and interests in life than people, in their mental and moral self-indulgence—cow-

ardice, are willing to admit. For life itself is varied when it is normal, and we require this variety to remain healthy and sane human beings. Consider as well this one side of our life, my dear friend: the complete expression and artistic fulfilment of the powers, aptitudes and tasks within us! Because you cannot be a Titian, you need not stop painting. We so often think that the intensity of our desire is a measure of our capacity. But the question is, What do we desire? Our eyes are fixed upon the achievement, the success of a great man, instead of dwelling upon the inner and outer conditions which produced them, the steps by which they were attained. We must listen to the call of each power and aptitude within us; and if we are fortunate enough to be able to give them our ear, then we ought to bring out each one, to make ourselves that perfect thing which we were thus predestined to be. If we have a latent talent for art within us, it is our duty, and ought to be our pleasure, to bring it out; and not fling it away because that talent does not happen to be the genius of Titian. And as we are not Titians, but children of our fathers and mothers, born and living in countries and times which have their definite demands upon us and interests for us, let us give ear to the resonance of those calls as well!"

They arose and walked to the side of the ship. And in this mood of confidence he gave her an account of his own struggles in solving this question of the choice of a life-vocation.

What he did not explain to her, and could not have done, for it did not occur to him, was that he differed from her in that he was cast in a larger mould. The masculine vigour, the cardiac vitality, the fibre, the tissue of his will, of his character, were all more massive, of greater build, than were hers. It was not so much a question of intellect, it was almost the physical side of character, the *θυμοειδές* which corresponded to the greater physical strength of this man as compared with that woman. These were stronger and made him desire to be a great artist or none at all, because he was predestined to be a leader in what he took up, whether art, politics, business, or digging in mines.

But now he told her how he had decided that, as in his painting the sense of colour and pure form were his strongest points, decorative art was more his sphere than picture-painting. And then came the suggestion of his father, and he at once realised how, in taking up the work in their mills, he could find a truly useful vocation, and one which would most completely bring out his quali-

ties. He told her of his plans, and she was moved in sympathetic enthusiasm to follow him in the prospect of work he had laid out for himself.

And at last he confessed to her how his happiness had reached its climax when he realised the joy his decision had produced in his father and mother. He dwelt in self-reproach upon his neglect of them in all his previous life. How their very kindness, their undemonstrative self-effacement, had imperceptibly made him selfish. Such undemonstrative parents or wives produce the same results in those nearest them as, by opposition, do those who are constantly exacting and demanding sacrifices. He had not realised before how they were longing quietly for some great manifestation on his part of his thought of them; and how, by this one act of his, he had a revelation of all the possibilities before him of contributing to their happiness and of entering into their lives. Surely, that was a great vocation as well!

As he said this there was a tremor in his voice, and, calling her his dear friend, he had taken her hand. They stood by the ship's side. It was a starlit night as they glided through the black sea streaked with silver. They appeared almost alone in this vast expanse with nothing but the sky and the sea and the stars. A wave of

gratitude and deep sadness gently stole over Ruth as she listened to his last words, and gazing out immovably over the sea, a tear rolled down her cheek. She withdrew her hand, murmured good-night, and left him.

CHAPTER XIII

THAT night their ship sighted Fire Island Light House, and early in the morning they passed through the Narrows into New York Bay.

Then the scene on deck and over the whole ship changed. There was brisk and hurried running to and fro among the passengers; their manner and their voices were altered from the languorous indifference of their sea habits to the brisk anticipation of all the excitement which awaited them on land. And as their manner, so their appearance underwent a complete metamorphosis. Men appeared in very shiny new silk hats with light summer suits or heavy black coats; women who had looked dowdy and slovenly on board, wearing their oldest and often soiled sea-clothes, appeared in costly finery, with hats and lace and jewels which could not have merely been designed to impress or honour their friends and relations who came to meet them. One lady, who had put on a splendid sealskin cloak on a hot August day, for instance, must have had some other object in committing this solecism.

Then the doctor and the custom-house officials came on board, and the passengers were forced to wait their turn in the hot saloon while making their "declaration," the purport of which was entirely ignored in the subsequent searching examination of all the luggage on shore. It was here that Van Zant could be of some service to Ruth, in occupying a place for her in the long file of impatient passengers awaiting their turn with the custom-house officer. The Beeks fared well, for several friends had arrived on the custom-house boat and had made matters easy for them.

In vain did Van Zant try to have a few quiet words with Ruth, but they could never be alone, nor was there a secluded spot on the ship. Moreover, the whole atmosphere about them was unfavourable to a quiet and collected mood, and they were affected accordingly: their feelings and their manner were strikingly different from the previous evening. He almost resented this, and he certainly felt a soreness.

He stood beside Ruth with the Sandemans and the Beeks as the huge ship, appearing colossal in proportion to the tiny tugs and other craft that flitted about them, slowly approached the pier, the end of which was packed with a dense crowd of people whose heads were bobbing about in eager

search for their friends on board. And as they drew nearer gestures and exclamations grew more definite and emphatic. Christian names, pet names, were shouted to and fro; people on board and on shore were vainly trying to identify their friends, calling to them or pointing them out to the person beside them, impatient at their stupidity in not at once following their indications. There were anxious enquiries, reassuring answers, sometimes veiling a sadder truth which was subsequently to be broken; jokes, sometimes witty, sometimes vulgar, always personal; laughter and tears—but joy predominating. It always remains an impressive scene of manifest human affection and joy. Still, Van Zant reflected that it lacked the deep impressiveness and solemn dignity of a departure; when the huge hulk, slowly and silently and relentlessly slides out into the distance, leaving a weeping and waving mass of fond friends standing on the shore and gradually dwindling out of sight, with the last flickering wave of a young girl's scarf and the dark, immovable dot beside her which represents an old father near his grave who watches his boy depart, perhaps never to see him again with mortal eyes. Does this impress us more than the joyful arrival, because grief is always more dignified than joy, or because we are

so made that pity is easier to us than congratulation?

Van Zant heard the familiar whistle which he and his brother had used when they were boys at home, and then he espied his brother in white flannels and straw hat standing far behind the crowd, where he could walk about. They waved their hands gleefully at one another. Near his brother, he noticed two old gentlemen dressed in dark clothes, one with white whiskers, looking in his direction. At that moment the older of the two, somewhat bent, but forcing himself to an erect posture, first raised his hat, smiling, and then gracefully kissed his hand towards them. He turned to Ruth, for he had felt her waving her veil a moment before, and he saw her staring at the old men, her face pale, her nostrils and lips quivering, and the tears rolling down her cheeks.

And then, after the shouting of rough voices and the screeching and rumbling of machinery and ropes drawn taut, and the lowering of the gangway, there was a rushing and a crowding, kissing and shaking of hands, sobbing and laughing. Then the luggage was massed on the wharf according to the initial letters of the passengers' names, and there followed all the confusion and vexation of identifying it and having it examined

by the custom-house officers. Considerable time elapsed before the baggage was all collected, and though the attention of passengers was distracted by the task of watching their own goods and chattels, there was time to exchange a few words.

It was then that Van Zant, after a hearty greeting from his brother, approached Ruth, who was with her father and uncle. He presented his brother, and was in turn introduced to Mr. Ward and her uncle. Ruth mentioned to her father the great kindness which Van Zant had shown her on the voyage, and the old man smiled kindly, bowed, shook hands, and thanked him for his goodness to his daughter. A few further remarks were exchanged, and he felt he ought to leave.

It was all so formal, so cold. He could hardly realise that his friend's father should treat him so coldly and formally. They had drawn so near to one another, and it seemed almost incongruous that their relations should, as it were, assume that each belonged so much more, so exclusively, to them. But he had to return to his luggage.

And when the examination was over, as he stood at the entrance to the pier, he saw Ruth entering a smart landau with the two gentlemen. She was evidently looking round among the people for some one, and then their eyes met and she

bowed and smiled towards him. He raised his hat, and then, with an uncontrollable impulse, he quietly kissed his hand to her. He could see a blush suffuse her face, as she drove off.

He hoped nobody had seen him; but he heard the soft voice of Mrs. Sandeman by his side: "That was a dear girl!"

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

RUTH did not return to Paris as she had originally intended. She had put off her departure from month to month. A whole year had passed since her voyage, and Christmas was approaching. She had now definitely settled not to return to Europe.

As a matter of fact, the decision, though not so clearly formulated in her mind, had come to her the very first evening after her return to her father's house. They had arrived in Boston so late that they had to spend the night there and could not continue their journey to Manchester-by-the-sea, where they lived in the summer, and where her mother was now awaiting her.

Their old house on Beacon Street at first struck her as singularly and agreeably old-world in contrast to the houses of New York. The streets themselves in their neighbourhood, and especially the view down Mount Vernon Street, with the strip of bay at the end, reminded her more of the

views in some old continental town in Europe than anything else in America.

She felt this still more strongly when she entered the library. Drawing-room there was none in this town house. The usual folding doors separating the front and back parlours of these American houses had been removed, and thus made one large, irregular-shaped room, like a broad aisle with choir and transept, the walls of which were covered with book-cases, on the tops of which were vases, jars, bronzes, a few marble busts and some casts from antiques. It was only over the two mantelpieces that there were no book-cases, and here hung a Paul Veronese; while on the sides were two water-colour drawings by Turner with excellent early proofs from the Liber Studiorum. An ingenious device of old Mr. Ward to relieve these rooms of the monotony of walls entirely covered with books was, that he had fixed a few excellent pictures, one a portrait by a Venetian master, on the upright strips of the book-shelves by means of hinges, so that, while gratifying the eye by their own beauty, the pictures could be turned forward to get at the books behind them. The library itself was an exceedingly fine one and reflected the taste of its collector, though many volumes had been amassed by

previous generations. Among them were a few exquisite illuminated manuscripts, as well as some fine specimens of early printing. Nothing that was there, however, owed its presence to the interest or passion of the collector; it was not rarity or the completeness of the collection that was aimed at, but the satisfaction of the tastes, the intellectual and artistic interests, of the owners.

Besides the two bedrooms occupied by Ruth and her father, this was the only room prepared for them by the old servant who guarded the house during the family's residence in the country. Ruth and her father had just returned from the hotel where they had supped. He was smoking his cigar in the library before going to bed, and she had asked that she might sit with him.

"But are you not tired, my dear Ruth?" Her father never used a pet name, however affectionate or coaxing his voice and manner might have been. "You have had a long journey and we must start early to-morrow morning; for your mother is impatiently awaiting you."

"Oh, no, dear father, not at all. I want to sit with you and talk." She suddenly had the image of her mother before her, sitting up still in the country, alone in the house, impatiently awaiting the moment when she could hold her child in her

arms. "Tell me honestly, dear father, is mother quite well and strong, has she aged at all since last year?"

"Well, for her years she is quite well and strong; though since she had the influenza last year, her nerves are not quite in good condition, and she is often depressed."

"Why did you not let me know of her illness? I should have returned at once. It was wrong of you, father," Ruth said with reproach in her voice. "It is horrible to think that she had no one of her own people to nurse her."

"She was well looked after, Ruth. We had an excellent professional nurse. There was no reason to worry you and to disturb your work. I should have cabled at once had things taken an unfavourable turn, and in fact I was on the point of doing it one day."

There was a pause, during which Ruth sat looking fixedly before her. The thoughts were rushing through her brain; and then in a softer voice she asked,

"Have you not both of you often felt lonely, dear father, without your little girl?"

"Well, since your brother left for the West your mother has at times felt lonely, and the house seems somewhat desolate. But I have managed to

have people stay with us as often as possible; and that always cheers her somewhat, though she does not realise it. At all events, it occupies her mind, which comes near to it. Of course we miss you, because we both love our little girl."

Ruth got up hastily, and sat on the arm of the easy chair in which her father was sitting and put her arm round his neck, she pressed her cheek to his and said in a low pleading voice:

"Tell me, daddie dear, do you think it right of me to be following my own life and pursuits far away from you, when you and mother are alone and lonely here?"

Her father gently removed her arm from his neck, drew a chair near his facing him, softly pressed her into it close to him, and taking her hand, he said with slow deliberation:

"My dear child, it is right for you to live your own life. This is not only a matter of general conviction on my part, but my personal experience has strengthened it into singular intensity. I have not told you much of my past life and my youth, my dear child, nor do I mean to enter into details. It is enough for me to tell you that I am convinced there would be more happiness in this world, less misery, and certainly less of the friction which undermines peaceful and affectionate

relations, if people were allowed to go their own way and to find their happiness after their own methods. And I am especially assured of this in the relation of parents to their children. There is more hidden or disguised selfishness in the absorbing and exacting affection of good parents than most of them are aware of. This has spoiled many a life at the very period of its strongest growth and development, while it has certainly done more to weaken affection and regard of children to their parents —nay, has even led to total estrangement—than even overt selfishness or indifference on the part of parents.

"Why," he continued, and there was a touch of sad humour in his voice and a flitting smile passed over his face, "from the point of view of far-sighted and deliberate parental selfishness, I do not wish to call for continual sacrifices on the part of my children. I never want them to feel me in their way. I want them to think of me without any cramped feeling of duties towards me to be fulfilled in the future or unfulfilled in the past. My ambition—my pride and vanity if you like—is, that they should look upon my interest in them, my advice, my praise and reproof—my company, as a privilege accorded them, not as a burden to

be borne. No, my dear Ruth; you must live your own life."

And then he rose, drew her up and kissed her, while he said in a changed voice, "And now you must go to bed, and get up betimes to-morrow."

Ruth kissed and clung to her father with more fervour than she had ever felt. It appeared to her that she had never loved him so dearly, that she had never understood him so well and respected him as much as at that moment.

His words and his manner recurred to her, vibrated on, as she lay in bed sleepless. Yes, there was much in what he had said, when said by *him*. But how about her own view of the matter, and how about her own life which she was to live? Had she the right to dissociate her life in this manner from that of her parents? Did not duty point towards them; and was it not one of the important functions of her own life to live in theirs? And if her taste did not point in this direction, was it not perverted, perverted by desires and ambitions which, by predisposition and talent, she was not likely to justify in achievement?

And rapidly and vaguely the mood evoked by her last talk with Van Zant, rather than the facts and details of it, came over her. She saw clearly

before her eyes the scenes during her mother's illness, and she felt in her heart the distress of the mother longing to have her daughter beside her, the anguish lest she should die without seeing her again. She lived through the lonely days when her mother sat, her needle-work on her lap, looking out into the distance and wondering how and where her child was at that moment, what she was doing, and fearing lest she should be in danger, moral or physical, and require her help. And then her sympathy led her to realise how the arch-enemy Fear, unreasonable, but overwhelming all reason, taking hold of her mother's nerves and heart, when these were weakened in their normal function, produced in her a feverish anxiety, amounting to anguish, which robbed her of all peace and sleep.

And meanwhile her father, feeling all this himself, and shaken in his equanimity by the contagion of fear, at the same time was straining every nerve to restore his wife's peace of mind. He was bearing these sufferings in silence, no word passing his lips as to his own feelings, supported only in his efforts by the conviction that it was best for his girl to be separated from them, clinging, while remembering the sufferings of his own youth, to the resolve to spare

those dear to him from the same fate. Not a word had he ever uttered against his own parents; but she clearly felt that to them was to be ascribed the failure of her father's life, which might have concentrated his many talents upon some great achievement, instead of allowing them to become attenuated and dissipated into amateurishness. His determination to allow his children to live their own lives was dogged and had become almost a fixed idea. He encouraged her brother to exert his manly energy in the West, as he had allowed her to study art in Paris; and meanwhile he devoted himself to the task of making her forget their absence. All this that she might lead her own life!

And what had her own life been, while her mother and father were silently suffering through her absence? Did her inner aptitudes, her predestined inner powers, did the *natural* tastes, which as a woman she ought to have, justify all this sacrifice? Had everything in life to make way for her as an artist, as would have been the case with a genius, or one upon whom devolved the task of supporting a family, or even himself, by the handiwork of his art? At all events, had her inclinations to be followed so exclusively, that all other tastes and duties remained invisible, left be-

hind, or voluntarily shut out from the range of perception?

And strongly the contrast between the lonely life of her mother and the busy variety of her Paris days stood out in cruel glaringness. She blushed as she saw her mother sitting up or lying in bed in feverish anxiety for her welfare, while she was gadding about in ridiculous Bohemian jollity and sham dissipation. How thoughtless and selfish, and above all, how ridiculous and vulgar it all appeared when it presented itself to her against the background—within the general proportions—of her life and destiny as a woman and a daughter!

How much and how often had she thought of her parents while she lived in Paris? A bitterness against herself came over her when she began, with exaggerated mathematical precision, to compare the amount of thought which they had bestowed upon one another. She felt sure that not a day passed in which her mother and father had not thought of her; that in these days perhaps she was their first thought upon awaking, and that there were many hours each day in which they lived in imagination and sympathy in her life. Whereas days and weeks passed in which her parents had hardly occurred to her, and then only

while she was writing to them, when some direct association of ideas recalled them, or when she required them to reflect in imagination her joy or sorrow, pride or humiliation in the heart's need for sympathy. It was then that her ingratitude, selfishness and hardness came before her in hideous nakedness, and she despised herself.

Yet herein Ruth was wrong and unjust to herself. Hers was the active, eager life of youth, full of movement, work, definite outer tasks and interests—a future to fashion and to create; theirs was the more passive, contemplative life of old age, which gains and absorbs pulsating vitality and interest in living in the activity of the young they love.

But there is an unspeakable sadness in this disproportion between the thought and affection bestowed by parents upon children and the response which the young make to it. In the life-giving world of Love, which the ancient Greeks recognised as the generating and moving principle of the universe, bestowing vitality and energy upon all things, there must be this disproportion, this overweighting on the one side of the scales; for it would mean stagnation were they equally balanced. There must be a surplusage of love from the old to the young, of parents to children; for

the children again must be striving on in search of that which is to absorb their heart; and this very search is the pulse of life and energy—the eye and the heart must strain forward. A life like Ruth's, that of a young person who was in the crisis of development, must be absorbed chiefly by the tasks and interests, the desires and passions, which lie without and are not reflective and contemplative: the powers within must be realised without, and this projection of self does not mean selfishness. But if such is the great course of the universe, it remains none the less sad that children should only be able to return in thin streamlets and drops the constant and full current of affection which flows to them from their parents.

But Ruth felt the bitterness against herself and her past Paris life; and before she fell to sleep that first night in her father's house, she practically determined not to return to Paris. Whenever her father broached the subject and urged her not to remain away from her work on their account, she put off her departure from month to month on some pretext or other, until a whole year had passed. She had now come to a clear understanding with her father. They decided to go to Europe together the following spring, and while her parents visited a German watering

place in the summer she was to remain in Paris until they joined her again in the autumn and winter. The affectionate attention she lavished upon her mother and father had a marked effect upon their happiness, and brought its recoil in her own soul, filling her days with an intense, yet peaceful satisfaction which she had never experienced before.

But meanwhile she did not neglect her painting. She had even to admit to herself, when she compared her efforts month by month, that there was recognisable progress. She began to realise that figure-painting would never be her *forte,* though a portrait she made of her father was well noticed by the press when exhibited. Her talent lay more in the direction of landscape and marine scenery. In her summer home on the coast she delighted in the endless variety of effects in the sea and the shore, the changes of sky and light, and the many problems of colour, design and tone which they presented. Meanwhile, she knew from her French masters that the human figure and the nude always remain the best schooling for every variety of drawing and painting, and she found abundant facilities for carrying on such work in Boston. Besides the schools which she visited occasionally, she formed a small association with several other

artists, women where, in a large studio, they provided their own models and arranged with two of the leading resident artists to pay weekly visits for criticism and direction.

Her training in the Paris schools gave her a position of eminence in this association, and she was hardly aware of her changed attitude of mind. For she appeared to herself one of the now 'old ones.' She looked with tolerance and some compassion upon the immature cultivation of Bohemian eccentricities in some of her artist-friends, which she had revelled in with absorbing zest while she was in Paris.

The more she worked at her painting and the more she accomplished, the more time she seemed to have for other occupation. The attention she paid to her parents seemed in no way to interfere with her work; she could assist her mother in the household, and duties which before she had shrunk from and despised were now a pleasure to her.

She even looked about for new tasks. When in the country she took active interest in providing recreation for children, not only children from the neighbourhood of Manchester, but, in co-operation with a movement headed by a young

man in Boston, little boys and girls of the poor city population. The day's outing which they thus organised consisted of games and excursions in the fields and sailing on the sea. She took real delight in this; for she did not feel herself drawn to charitable work which is more manifest, i.e., in doling out alms to paupers and invalids.

With all this, she was herself astonished to find how much greater pleasure she found in the familiar social amusements of her native town than had been the case when she was much younger. She was able to discern interesting features in the people who formed her father's circle, so that she took real delight in their company and conversation. Even the young people, with their dances and country parties, their gatherings for intellectual improvement and discussion had a freshness and enthusiasm coupled with a moral cleanliness, which exercised a great fascination over her. She entered into the life of these people, most of them younger and more inexperienced than herself, with a zest which was not only evoked by sympathy, but came from the actual youth in her and her healthy *joie de vivre*.

The young women whom she saw most of generally had some intellectual and artistic interest in

common with her. But, more than in the earlier days, did she find pleasure in the society of men. Among these were some artists, or men engaged in some form of public or charitable work which led to their meeting. On the other hand, much younger men, younger than herself, who had no manifest serious interest of this kind, cheerful and healthy boys, fine dancers and keen sportsmen, with good manners, a fund of high spirits—and all with a great admiration for her—seemed to please her even more than the more serious men. But neither of the two categories could take a firm and lasting hold on her imagination and interest, each seemed to be wanting in something which her nature appeared to require.

As a matter of fact her memory often took back to the friend whom she had met on her last voyage and who had taken so firm a hold of her thoughts—of her life. At first it was more the topics they had touched upon and the views and thoughts he had expressed which led her constantly to dwell upon the incidents of that sea-trip. The whole intellectual atmosphere of the voyage and of the discussions she had had with Van Zant seemed to penetrate her nature, her mental habit, and gave her a new

way of looking at things. She seemed to understand her father better; and in the talks she had with him, much more frequent and delightfully intimate than they had been in previous years, she would not only quote Van Zant, but would often supply what she thought he would have said by a phrase like—"I am sure Mr. Van Zant would have answered you . . ." Her father seemed quite familiar with Van Zant and would, with good-humoured chaff, refer to him as "Your wise Friend."

But a personality that was so near to her, and had become in a way a part of her, was at first not recognised as a personality at all. She was quite content that the person should vanish from her mind, however much he seemed to enter into her life. She seemed satisfied that he should remain a creature of memory and of imagination, however vivid he was as such. For again and again, in whatever she did and undertook, she imagined his presence and gauged what effect her actions and decisions would have had upon him. And when she had clearly resolved not to return to Paris, he was the active spectator and approver of her resolution, if not a chief agent in urging her on to that decision.

But this state of her mind did not last; and the

reality forced itself upon her life of pure imagination as far as Van Zant was concerned. The change must have come about suddenly. It probably came during the late spring of the year following her return, when her brother had come from the West on a visit.

In the course of conversation with him she had casually mentioned Van Zant's name, whereupon her brother remembered his being at Harvard with him. He had not known him personally; for Van Zant had just entered his senior year when he had come up as a Freshman. He had been "far too great a person for him to meet at that time"; for he had been one of the most popular men in the University, a member of the Hasty Pudding Club, who rowed in the Varsity Boat, besides being in the football and baseball teams. As far as he could remember he struck him as being "pretty wild" in those days, rather "a hard case," he should have said.

To hear of him thus from her brother, and in this absolutely new tone and aspect, produced a curious impression upon Ruth. It all tended to break through her web of imagination and to bring him back to her in flesh and blood. She began to inquire eagerly for further information, but her brother could give her none.

From that time on she began to think of Van Zant more frequently and in a different manner. She wondered why she had not heard from him, or met him again, and tried to imagine the kind of life he was leading. No doubt he would be in New York a great deal, and would take part in the social whirl and dissipation of the Metropolis. In looking over the morning papers, her eyes would now turn to the New York letter giving paragraphs of the fashionable entertainments there; and, curiously enough, she one day hit upon his name among a number of others mentioned as being at one of the fashionable dances.

A kind of resentment crept over her, somewhat similar to the feeling he had evoked in her when first she saw him on the steamer and before she had made his personal acquaintance. He had probably forgotten all about her. The mood and the atmosphere of serious and deep thought and lofty principles had been shaken off by him the moment he entered the scented atmosphere of the New York drawing-rooms. The other side in him, which he had endeavoured to suggest to her, was probably now predominant; and perhaps he laughed at himself for having taken her and him-

self and all they talked of so seriously when on the steamer.

Her more critical observation of many earnest and original young ladies, whom she had seen in Boston, made her alive to the weaknesses and the comic aspect of many traits in them, as well as the seriousness with which they took themselves; and she felt sure she must have cut the same figure before him. When she realised this a great resentment rose up in her, and she felt like stamping her foot with impotent irritation.

But there were other more mellow moments in which she thought of him quite differently. She almost saw the expression of his face and heard the soft vibration of his deep voice as, moved by true and sincere emotion, he confided to her what appeared to be the very foundation of his life and aspirations. He then spoke of things with a fervour which could be as little feigned as it could be but the passing thought of a moment, flitting along the surface of the brain without lasting relation to the wholeness of his life.

Between these two conceptions of him, and the moods which they evoked in her, she vacillated as with increasing frequence and continousness, she thought of her friend. So frequent and tenacious were these thoughts that, when she

realised how difficult it would be for him to communicate with her, she had one day resolved to write to him. But a powerful instinct arose within her and checked this impulse whenever it made itself felt.

She could not, however, believe that these thoughts of a chance acquaintance could in any way be accountable for another change which came over her while she was in the country. This was a growing feeling of restlessness and a vague discontent, coupled with a shrinking from being alone. Of this latter experience she was quite unconscious; for she imagined that she was singularly free from dependence upon company, and that she enjoyed nothing more than being left to herself without fear of intrusion or interruption. She believed this so much that she could not regard, with either sympathy or tolerance, the constant craving for company and social chatter which she remarked in so many of her friends and which seemed to point to an education fundamentally wrong and ineffectual. But this restless state and this distate of aloneness grew in her gradually, and she was shocked to find that one day she was quite miserable when left by herself, after she had been looking forward to this experience with pleasure for many days.

It was toward the end of October, while in their beautiful country house at Pride's Crossing, that her parents had left for a few days on a visit to some relations, and that no guests were staying in the house. She had met their counsel to invite some of her own friends to stay with her during their absence, so that she should not be alone, by the assurance, "that a few days' of absolute repose pose was what she needed most at that moment; that she had a great many things to do, and that she should enjoy being alone"—and she checked herself in time from insisting too much upon the delight at being forsaken by them, by adding with a smile—"to prepare her for the pleasure of having them back again."

In all of this she was quite sincere, and it would certainly have been true of her some months before.

But when she found herself alone in the house, had prepared her easel, her canvas and her brushes in her little studio, had looked over and sorted her letters and laid out in order all those she meant to answer without haste, and had selected the books she had put by for days of complete quiet—she found that not one of these tasks could hold her attention for any time. She be-

gan to think of the visits among the poor people which she might pay, yet which naturally came into the ordinary routine of her life when her parents were there, and even when guests were in the house.

And when these visits were paid, she found herself strolling about in the garden, wasting the time of the gardener with inept directions and pointless questions; and, after wandering about the house, which appeared singularly still and forsaken, she gave up painting, as the light appeared too bad, and forced herself to settle down with a book in her boudoir which faced the sea. But every now and then she would interrupt her reading and would go to the window and look out over the water in listless contemplation of its vastness.

Nor was there any charm in having a little dinner prettily served in her own boudoir, which had delighted her on previous occasions. And when the evening wore away and the night drew on, she dreaded the coming days and longed for her parents' return.

She, who never knew what ill health was, began to fear that her discomfort might mean the beginning of some illness, for she lay sleepless in bed that night, tossing about and unable to collect her thoughts; and as the hours wore on this

state of feverish tension grew to such a pitch that she got up out of bed.

She opened the window and allowed the fresh night air to play about her brow, and the calmness of the night at once soothed her fluttering spirit. A strip of garden lay below her feet; dark masses of blue-black shadow with only a glint here and there on shiny leaves as the moon, herself invisible, touched them from the side. But below and beyond came a brighter stretch of beach, upon which the breakers, in slow and regular roll, encroached and receded in lullaby rhythm, trailing her fleeting thoughts with them into dreamy peace. And as the moon sent her rays through riven clouds over the far expanse of the sea, with long silver streaks bordered by the mass of water, dark blue and inky black, her spirit was gently drawn out and on by these bright rivulets, until they were lost in the wide expanse of night. The gentle sound of waves within the stillness, the mystic light within the darkness, all lapped her thoughts into a shadowy vagueness, until they merged into one mysterious feeling which spread over her slowly and softly as the rollers advanced caressingly on the beach. This wave of gentle emotion rose to her heart, and swelled her breast till it expanded in its maiden

fulness, and, bending out into the night, she raised her arms to the sea, and, with a sigh of yearning, she crossed them over her breast and pressed them there. . . .

The day preceding her parents' departure a worldly and beautiful neighbour had paid them a visit. She was a woman much admired by men, sprightly and a good talker, cultured and of extensive, if not deep, reading. She was considered one of the best dressed women of Boston, had travelled much, and had seen much. Some severer people did not approve of Mrs. Ackland; for she made a point of seeking her pleasure in places and at times which did not suit Mr. Ackland, so that the two were rarely seen together. In fact, some people considered her "fast."

But Ruth delighted in her. She admired her beauty and her grace, and even her eccentricities, candidly and without reserve; the air of the distant world which emanated from her pleased her as the perfume of some rare flower. The whole personality had an intense fascination for her. In intellectual and artistic taste, moreover, Ruth and she had found many points of contact. On one or two rare occasions Mrs. Ackland's impulsive and demonstrative nature had led her to con-

fide in her younger companion, as few of her friends had done; and Ruth then discerned depths, as well as delicacies, of feeling, with a touch of pathos in her past history, which converted her sympathy into more than mere amusement or interest in this personality. Ruth had several times found herself in the position of apologist and champion of this woman of fashion, when the talk of her more serious or severe friends turned upon Mrs. Ackland.

On the day of her visit, Mrs. Ackland had just returned from Lenox and seemed to bring with her all the subtle and joyous buoyancy of that gay and fashionable centre. She gave an account of the good time she had had there, and suddenly interrupted her prattle by turning to Ruth and saying: "Oh, I had almost forgotten the chief thing I wanted to tell you. I met a great friend and admirer of yours at Lenox—such a charming man! Most of the Lenox women are in love with him, and I am among their number. He is too serious for them—not for me—though he is such a good dancer. But he seemed rather bored and told me he was going to leave the day after I last saw him. I do not know how we came to speak of you.— Yes, I think it was he who asked whether I knew you. When I said I did, and that

you were a great friend of mine, and that I hoped to see you in a few days, he gave a start. But he seemed to recover himself at once, and said he thought you had returned to Paris many months ago. He then said, very directly and seriously, that he admired you much. Those were the very words he used, but I cannot give his accent; there was something so emphatic and convincing about his 'much.' And then he began to inquire about you—not indiscreetly, and listened intently all the while I was talking about you—much more than he had done when I was talking about myself. And he wanted to know what you did, and where you lived, and he took down your address in Boston. And when we parted, I must tell you that he said he hoped he might call upon *me* when in Boston this winter—having quite forgotten that, but half an hour before, when I had asked whether I should see him in Boston, he had said that he would be kept hard at work at their silk works in Connecticut all the winter and that he could hardly hope for a holiday."

CHAPTER II

MEANWHILE Van Zant's experience during the summer months of the year following the sea-voyage had not been very different from that of Ruth—in fact, in some respects, it had been very similar.

During the winter and spring his mind had been so fully occupied with the new life into which he had entered and the work he had undertaken, that all his energies were absorbed, and there was not much time for reflection or sentiment.

He lived a secluded life in the small Connecticut town where they had their silk mills, his brother and he keeping house together in a bachelor's home, which they made as comfortable as such homes can be. He saw no company there, nor had he even much time for reading. For he found the work in the factory so engrossing that it kept him busy all day long, and what time he had to spare in the evening was devoted to the elaboration of new plans and the preparation of new work for the morrow.

He had at once discovered that the methods of weaving employed in their factory were anti-

quated, that an old routine was clung to throughout, and that the distribution of labour and the discipline among the labourers were irrational and lax. It required much tact and persistence on his part to introduce new machinery and to alter the established organisation of work. But during the first winter he succeeded in carrying his points, and the advantages made themselves felt so rapidly, that he at once took a prominent position among the managers and directors, and was allowed a free hand to inaugurate any reforms he chose.

While thus directing his attention chiefly to the practical and commercial side of manufacture, he found time, and obtained permission, to establish a small special department of his own, in which he began the manufacture of silks and brocades with truly artistic designs made by himself. The work in this department took the place of relaxation and amusement; and in addition to the satisfaction in the work itself, he had the triumph of attracting the notice of artists and people of taste, and, through them, of the press and the public, by some brocades which he sent to the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in New York. This was not only a triumph over the practical men in the factory, who had shaken their heads skepti-

cally when they allowed him to have his own way in this matter, but it looked as if he might actually create a new demand in the market by the supply of goods of such superior quality.

While thus paying due regard to the immediate practical requirements of the business for which he was responsible, in supplying the existing demand within the limits of cheapness and quality, he had the gratification of actually verifying one of his favourite economic theories, which was that, not only art, literature and science, but even business and industry of the higher order, had among their social functions the one of creating a demand for that which the conscientious and able producer deemed a good and desirable article—to lead and guide public opinion and tastes, not only to follow and to satisfy them.

Another theory which he clung to concerned the responsibility of the employer to his workmen and his duty to further their physical and moral welfare. Yet in living up to his convictions in this sphere he at first encountered difficulties, which were due to the fact that he could not hit it off with the people about him—not so much the workmen themselves as the men who held superior positions in the works and the other people with whom he had to associate in his home.

This failure he soon discovered was due to the foreign manners which he had acquired during his long stay abroad. But he soon found that it was not only a question of manners, but a question of tastes underlying them, which again were based upon fixed standards; and these standards had become stereotyped and narrowly exclusive in him. His brother, who was a healthy, muscular type of the American University man, who had thrown himself vigorously into the active life of business in his country and had never allowed himself to be affected by foreign customs, soon made it clear to him that he was on the wrong tack and would have to reform.

"You can't get on with these people here, George," he had said in his straightforward, jovial way. "And if I were one of them I would not let you get on. You must come off that perch! Climb down, old man! They won't stand it."

"I will climb down as much as you like," Van Zant had answered, "if you will tell me how I am to do it. I am sure I try my best."

"No you don't. You've always got an air of superiority. I even feel it myself. Your manners may be better than ours, and the things you care for most may be better than the things we

care for. But if you make us feel this we don't like you the more for it."

"Why shouldn't you all take me as I am, as I am quite willing to take you as you are?" Van Zant had replied with some querulousness in his voice. "Why should I alter my whole nature and being? I am made that way. . . ."

"Rats! Don't tell me that, George! You once told me long ago when I saw you in Europe that I should not be so friendly with the English people I met, and that you yourself had to alter your habit of cordiality when you were living in England, because the people there didn't understand it. Now cordiality is decidedly a good thing. But you gave it up and adapted yourself to their ways. Why not do it here now? It is well worth it if you want to live and work among us."

His brother's words had a great effect upon him and set him thinking a good deal on comparative manners. He no longer observed the people with an initial readiness to criticise, but rather with a sympathetic willingness to make the best of them, and to account for their peculiarities by the conditions under which they lived. And he thus even began to admire what before had startled or shocked him. Having altered his basis of observation and judgment in the di-

rection of sympathy, the rest followed spontaneously and naturally, and he soon began to make way with his men.

The work he did in the organisation of the Working Men's Club and Library, as well as the lectures he gave with magic-lantern illustrations on foreign travel, sites and works of art, began to be more frequented and almost popular. But his real success did not begin until during the late spring.

He had taken an active part in training both the football and baseball teams, and in arranging for matches with neighbouring towns and clubs. Not only did his prominence here—a revival of his prowess in undergraduate days—stand him in good stead, to make him the friend and hero of his own men; but in the free and democratic atmosphere of all sport and athletics, his own manner lost all embarrassment and reserve, and his native amiability made itself felt and won over even those who had at first been opposed to him.

Social pleasures among his equals he had hardly found time for during this period. He had paid a few visits to New York during the winter and spring and had been well received there by his own friends and connections, and had been asked to dinners and balls.

But here his power of adaptation forsook him for the nonce. Nor did he think it necessary to make the effort which had led to success in his dealings with workmen and business connections. His analytical, comparative and critical bias made itself felt when testing the social amusements of his native metropolis. And though he did not disapprove of its society actively, nor detract from it in thought or word, it failed to attract or amuse him.

It all struck him as fundamentally amiable, and even affable, in character; yet pervaded by a tone of immaturity and crudeness which at once struck him as the most prominent characteristic. There was an intentionality, a business-like energy put into everything which these highly strung people undertook that robbed their social life of repose, sometimes of dignity, and made him feel—whether at a literary gathering of men in a club or an intellectual circle in a fashionable house or at a great dinner or ball—that the people concerned meant to do the thing well and were always manifestly conscious of this endeavour and exertion. Dinners, balls, private theatricals or historical fancy-dress entertainments seemed to manifest the purpose "to break the record" in each one of these departments.

The very freshness and vigour, the bubbling over of breezy vitality, thus carried into the life of social relaxation, whatever undoubted merits it might point to, failed to provide him with social recreation after his work and did not attract him.

Moreover, search as he would, he could not find in this great city a circle or set which had crystallised into complete harmony of interests and tastes. The people all seemed to be thrown together fortuitously, and time was not given for them to settle down into the residuum of reposeful understanding.

When he realised that he was thus not at one with the people among whom his lot was cast and that after his work was done there was not much for him to look to in the way of relaxation and enjoyment, a great sadness came over him and he felt a depression which he could only shake off when absorbed in the work of the factory.

In these moments he would revert, not so much to the memory of his years in Europe, but to the last intermediary link between his present and his past life, namely the sea-voyage and the young girl who was the chief figure in those scenes. He felt that he had been unjust to her, and that after all, she had been right in feeling that her artistic

nature and her higher aspirations could not develop and flourish in the atmosphere of their native home. He wondered how she was faring after her return to Paris and almost envied her the interesting life she was leading there. He even began to dream of taking his first holiday in a run over to Paris, and of hunting her up there, and of renewing an acquaintance which had left an interest in him, deeper and more lasting than any he had ever experienced before.

No doubt the immediate incentive to these thoughts of Ruth was given when he spent a delightful evening dining with the Sandemans, who, unfortunately for him, had not remained long in New York. Mrs. Sandeman had, without undue emphasis, recalled the incidents of the sea-voyage and had dwelt admiringly upon the picture of "that *sweet* girl." She seemed surprised when her inquiry about her met with Van Zant's answer that "he had never heard of her again." Later in the evening she remarked in a general way that she could not understand the young men of to-day, to whom it never seemed to occur that the chance of winning the greatest prize in life, the affections of a noble woman, was worth any effort. And the gentle old lady fell into a tone of bitter combativeness and ironical resent-

ment as she said: "They read sympathetically of the fate of Troy hanging by the eyelashes of Helen, of savages slaughtering each other for a woman, of Romeo stealing into the house of the Capulets by a silk ladder—and they never dream that it is worth while to give up a business engagement in order to see the woman for whom their soul is pining."

As the summer wore on, and after the first burst of energy in his organising work had spent itself, he had more leisure to live in his own thoughts. The restlessness and dissatisfaction, the craving for genial company and the response and sympathy, which even the most self-centred among us require, became stronger and more clamorous. And in these moods the thought of Ruth presented itself more and more vividly, and the desire to meet her again became more persistent. When the day's work was over and the workmen's club was deserted in the summer evenings, so that there was no occupation for him there, he found the nights very lonely in his bachelor home. His brother, who delighted in company of any kind, generally left him to himself. It was then that his old enemies, depression and weariness of self, which had tortured him so persistently when he was struggling to find the real

bearings of his life-work in previous years, harassed him again.

But his despondency was of a different order from what it had been. He was, on the whole, satisfied with his work, and was happy with that side of his life. The conflict was not confined to the forces within his own breast, creating a turmoil there that robbed him of inner peace, and shut out in its gloom all the brighter light of the world without. But in these moments all the forces of his soul combined seemed to make for, and yearn for, something outside himself, where the struggle of active life should end in peace and the soul should drink its joy and expand without struggle.

Still he stuck to his work, while his brother and the other managers took their holiday, during all the heat of the summer and early autumn, and it was only at the end of October that he accepted an invitation to stay with some friends at Lenox.

It was here that he met Mrs. Ackland and heard from her that Ruth had not returned to Paris and that she would spend the winter in her Boston home. The thrill which he experienced when he heard this news, the eagerness with which he listened to the enthusiastic praise which this sprightly lady of the world bestowed upon his

friend, and the great effort of restraint it cost him not to ply her with question after question in eager urgency, revealed to him that evening how deep was his admiration for his ocean friend and how strong a hold she had upon him.

From that day the thought of her hardly left him; and upon his return to the factory, he worked on feverishly until the day should arrive when he would be allowed to take a long Christmas holiday, which he decided to spend in Boston.

Thus it was that, about the middle of December, when Ruth and her parents were well established in their Boston home, they found, upon returning in the afternoon, the cards of George Van Zant, who was staying at the Brunswick.

Fortunately for Ruth, she was standing in the shadow of the door, her parents having passed before her, when her father read out the name from the card on the hall table, and, after an exclamation of pleased surprise shouted, "Why! Here is the great man at last! I feel as if I had known him for years. I shall return his call tomorrow morning and shall ask him to dine with us in the evening. Don't you think we ought, Ruth?"

CHAPTER III

WHEN the two friends met, it was in the drawing-room of the Beacon Street house, in the presence of her parents; and though, as they stood looking into each other's eyes with hands clasped, the fact that they were not done forced them to moderate the warmth of their greeting, on the other hand, it helped them over the moment which they both had been looking forward to so eagerly and the significance of which they feared to show in its full depth.

Ruth had undoubtedly changed most; and as her eyes shone upon him with an expression of unalloyed joy and the colour rose to her face, he was delighted to find how much younger and fresher she looked than on the sea voyage, and how all the traces of the restless worry which gave a worn expression to the lines about her mouth and cheeks had completely vanished. Her face and figure, her movements and her whole bearing were not only more womanly, but decidedly more girlish. This impression was no doubt heightened by the fact of her being with her parents, to whom she showed a marked filial tenderness and deference.

Ruth passed through some moments of expectant anxiety, which we all feel when our friends for the first time meet those near to us—the hope that they should like one another, and the trepidation lest they should mar and vitiate the established relation we hold to our friends by manifesting disapproval or antagonism. It was only for a few moments that she felt this; for it was delightful to see how soon and how completely Van Zant came to an understanding with her parents, all of them clearly manifesting how favourably they were impressed with one another.

To her mother he showed chivalrous deference, and throughout the evening made her the chief centre of his attentions; so that the reserved and rather shy lady, who usually had not much to say for herself—in fact, in the presence of her superior husband and daughter generally was more passive and silent—really blossomed out into a vivacity and loquaciousness which father and daughter had rarely noticed in her before. And Ruth felt grateful to Van Zant for his success in this direction and for the effort which led to it, especially as it in no way appeared an effort to him.

With her father he at once established complete understanding; and she could herself see

how it required no effort whatever on his part and how congenial to him were the thoughts and views, the tastes and preferences, in fact, the whole personality of her father. The evening was passed in a continuous series of pleasant meetings on common grounds of interest and in the exchange of views and experiences that each was glad to give or to receive. From the beginning of dinner to the talk round the fire in the drawing-room, until at last Mr. Ward saw his guest out at the door, the two men were brought nearer toward an intimacy which each confidently hoped for and felt sure would come.

When their guest had left, her mother as well as her father lavished praises upon him. There was a recapitulation of the qualities in Van Zant she knew so well, and the knowledge of which she was delighted to have confirmed by others. She felt gratitude to her parents for perceiving them as well as to Van Zant for possessing them.

Mr. Ward had offered Van Zant the hospitality of his house, and had invited him to stay with them. But when the young man said that he was comfortably established at the hotel, he did not press his invitation further than to urge that, while living at the hotel, he hoped he would make

their house his home for the time being, and would come in to meals whenever it suited him, looking upon himself as if he were a guest staying in the house. This Van Zant gratefully accepted; and from that day he spent most of his time with the Wards. He was not only enchanted with all the members of the family, but their circle of friends as well. The whole social atmosphere surrounding them struck a resonant fibre in him and satisfied the craving for congenial company which had remained unassuaged for more than a year.

If Ruth felt that their friendship had entered on a new phase of intimacy, that it had become more domestic and firmly fixed in character, she, on the other hand, missed that fresh and unreserved spirit of *camaraderie* which, during their voyage, had led them together into discussions of the things in life which appeared most important to them. She was longing to have another good continuous talk such as they had had while seated in their deck chairs on the *Majestic*. But this could not well be. Van Zant's whole attitude with regard to her had undergone a change. For he had become conscious of the deep impression she was making upon him, so that her personality preoccupied his thoughts and did not allow of

clear and dispassionate dwelling upon impersonal matters. The more Ruth as a girl fascinated him, the more did he lose the control of the maturer side of his nature, and the more did he return to the earlier stage of eager boyhood which comes to every man when love begins.

He felt this most strongly when once he had accompanied Ruth to a dance. He then experienced both the delight and pain, belonging by rights to our earlier years, which in similar circumstances robs every man of his equanimity and makes it difficult to retain the dignity befitting his maturer age. After the inebriating joy of his first waltz with her, a gloom, growing into actual torture, came over him as he watched her dancing with other men; and his critical habit of self-analysis made him compare himself with those fine young fellows in the first flush of vigorous manhood with whom she seemed to enjoy her dances so keenly, and who seemed so much more in harmony with her maidenly grace and freshness than he, at that moment, with his heavy heart and and weary brain. And as he recognised this, an undefined sense, like a band of jealousy, was woven round his heart and compressed its beating. And when Ruth came to him in

triumphant and generous brightness, and asked him whether he would not like another dance, he pleaded fatigue, though he was longing for another turn, and resented the readiness with which she accepted the invitation of the slim young partner on whose arm she had come to him. It caused him a supreme effort to hide his feelings from her as they drove home that night, and he would certainly have avowed his love to her on that occasion if his clear thought and his self-control had not urged him to realise how unsuitable a moment it was.

It was only on two occasions that he appeared his old self again to Ruth: once when they spent a morning together at the Museum of Fine Arts, and again on an evening after they had all returned from a performance of *Tristan and Isolde.*

On the former occasion they were alone, and Ruth had urged him while they were walking to the museum to tell her of his work and aspirations in his Connecticut factory. The eager sympathy with which she entered into his account and the encouraging pleasure which she evinced when he told her of his success in the factory and with the men, warmed him up to an enthusiasm in which he not only related his past experiences and his immediate plans, but even went far afield into the

distant and ultimate aims and ideals which he had set himself.

It was then that Ruth on her part again felt a strong impulse of demonstrative affection for the man at her side, which threatened to make her lose her balance and to show him more than her self-esteem would permit.

And then he illustrated to her in the museum his own views on decorative art. The chief point which he insisted upon was that our taste should be spontaneous without being narrow, original without being unmindful of the best work of the past or consciously and directly opposed to it. He complained that in the present day, and especially in America—though, owing to the centralisation of modern life in towns and in the great metropolises, it was to be found all over the world—the reign of fitful and tyrannical fashion, leading to exaggeration and insincerity, was supreme. That for the time being, even though they might be led to appreciate some form of art unknown to them before, people shut their eyes completely to the beauty in other forms. The monotonous and stereotyped decoration of the third quarter of the century, flimsy and counterfeit in material and workmanship, was succeeded by a great reactionary wave in which the decorative feeling

seemed above all to oppose itself to stereotyped proportion and symmetry. And thus a movement, headed in architecture by Richardson, with his preference for the Norman stunted arch, began, and led to the construction of buildings in which window lines and roof lines were meant immediately to express the need for aggressive individualism—all manifesting a negative desire to avoid the regularity and symmetry which had become so wooden and lifeless in the previous generation. And while thus producing buildings that were in themselves original, the general effect was restless and often grotesque—at best picturesque in their rustic irregularity rather than architectural in civic order. The blocks of buildings and streets, taken as a whole, again presented so shapeless and restless a mass of buildings, that what was meant for harmonious variety turned into lawless license and discord.

He proceeded to show how the same movement was strengthened in its effect upon decorative design, by a complex tangle of very different influences. Among these he noted the Gothic and Romanesque revivals into which had filtered a more foreign and barbarous element coming from the Far East in the familiarity with Japanese art in America, and, through the Exhibition of 1878,

in France; and how all these positive currents came to strengthen the negative reaction against the stern regularity and symmetry of decoration in previous periods.

This was noticeable in architectural friezes, mouldings and other carvings, in the ornaments of furniture, of wall paper and textiles, as well as in wood-cuts and decorative designs for books and their bindings.

But this wave seemed again to have spent itself, and we had returned, with the same vigour and exaggeration, to the Italian and French Renaissance, which now held supreme sway as a fashion and was sheepishly accepted by the whole population. So Louis XVI followed Chippendale, and Empire threatened to expel Louis Seize.

As they passed through the picture gallery and the fine collection of Greek casts, he showed her how, in the same way, the just appreciation of the beauty in earliest Italian painting and in the Archaic form of Greek sculpture had led people to put up as the highest standard what was, after all, but a preliminary stage in the development of these arts, leading to the highest perfection in the painting of a Titian and a Raphael and in the sculpture of a Phidias and a Praxiteles.

If he appeared his familiar self on this day and while they were having their talk as of old, a new element was introduced into the tone he adopted on the second occasion, in which he was drawn into the serious discussion of a general topic, and this element had never appeared before with the same strength and clearness.

Van Zant seemed to relinquish the tolerant, sympathetic or impersonal calmness and gentleness of his usual attitude in discussion, the light touch of *bonhomie* and undercurrent of humour in which he seemed to laugh at himself as well as at others—to regard his own views or preferences, as it were, from the outside—and he manifested personal passion, even querulousness, which made all his words sound more human, more youthful—so it appeared to her—more womanly.

And, strange to say, this step down from the serene heights of intellectual justice and sympathy, even this manifestation of temper, pleased Ruth; and so far from jarring upon her, it seemed to bring him nearer to her.

He had accompanied Ruth, her father, and one of Ruth's woman friends to a performance of *Tristan and Isolde* which had thrilled them all. As they sat at home over supper in the afterglow

of this mood, a discussion arose in which Mr. Ward modestly put forth his views on Wagner's music. He frankly admitted the limitations of his taste, in that he had for so long been bred, as regards music, upon the old masters, that he could not completely appreciate the music of Wagner. He acknowledged this to be a limitation in his own taste, admitting that those who so sincerely admired must be right, and that those who could not follow them were lacking in a sense of appreciation which the admirers possessed.

The whole manner of the old gentleman was so simple and modest, that Van Zant was stung into acute irritation by the flippant and patronising manner in which Ruth's friend taunted Mr. Ward. Perhaps Van Zant was unconsciously jealous of the admiration which Ruth paid her friend, who appeared to his clear sight to be unworthy of such admiration. For she was one of those amateurs of art who make up for the superficiality of their knowledge by the intensity, exaggeration and exclusiveness of their praise of some one form of art which they seem to claim as specially their own. He at first took no part in the conversation, but sat in glum silence listening to her unbounded and indiscriminate praise of Wagner, her jeers at all other great musicians, and her arrogant

treatment of the sound views enunciated by Mr. Ward. At last he broke out deliberately, the calm and blunt dogmatism, so foreign to his usual manner, imperfectly hiding his irritation:

"I have been an admirer of Wagner since my early boyhood, when there were very few who shared my admiration. But though I recognise him as one of the great geniuses of modern times, I do not see why this should blind us into a slavish approval of everything he has done—which cannot be a genuine tribute to his genius. The degree and sincerity of our admiration is not measured necessarily by our unwillingness to listen to any criticism. That there are frequent faults and flaws of taste in the construction of some of his dramas is beyond all doubt; that there are inordinate lengths which point to a want of moderation and artistic tact in Wagner's constitution; that there are even musical effects which are occasionally *barocco,* if not in bad taste, can be recognised, without ignoring the unsurpassed heights which his musical dramas and his music as such have attained. I do not fear to confess, for instance, that, both in the philosophy which pervades his several dramas, as well as in the sensuous dramatic elaboration of his ideas, with some striking exceptions, even in the music

itself, *Parsifal* marks a downward step from the great composition we have heard this evening. That his heroification of innocence in the *Pure Dolt,* his symbolic, and therefore undramatic, illustration of Charity, of Purification through service and suffering—that all these are given in *Parsifal* in a doctrinaire and inartistic manner, without dramatic sensuousness of presentation, and that this is not the case with the central idea in the *Nibelungen Ring,* and especially in his *Lohengrin, Tannhäuser, Meistersinger* and *Tristan."*

He paused for a moment and then turned again to the esoteric Wagnerian. "When I say this to a so-called Wagnerian, he is either prepared to knock me down, or to put me down as one who never appreciated the great Master, or as one who has become a traitor to the Cause. But why should we blind ourselves to manifest flaws, in order that we should retain our appreciation and admiration of great artists? If I were to tell you that I have a great admiration for Schubert, I should be telling you the truth; and still, at the same time, I can say, that his lengths and repetitions and endless elaboration of his themes often bore me; that the affected shortness and abrupt surrendering of a good theme worthy of elabora-

tion, as well as the ignoring of the important lyrical element in repetition, irritate me in Schumann, whom I love; that with Beethoven, whom I worship, the famous choral symphony, as far as the choral theme goes, does not appear to me at the height of his great productions, as little as does the Pastoral Symphony with the Dance of Peasants, and that 'Adelaide' as a song, with some beautiful passages, has some phrases that come near to false sentiment. In art, as in our relation to people, true loyalty and faithful affection only exist when, while recognising the faults, we can still ardently admire the virtues and love the whole personality."

He had hardly delivered himself of this diatribe, when he regretted the warmth with which his words were spoken and the change of tone which his strictures had brought into the party.

Only Ruth seemed pleased by what he said, while her friend, her father, and especially Van Zant himself, were made extremely uncomfortable; and then the young lady rose and said hastily that "she *really* must go now or her people would be anxious." Mr. Ward at once insisted that he must see her home, adding, as he turned to Van Zant:

"Please await my return. I shall not be gone

long, and I should like to have the 'before-bed' cigar with you."

When they had left, Van Zant sat in his deep easy chair, his elbow on the arm, his head resting in his hand, gazing moodily before him with an expression of misery and disgust. Ruth sat at the other end of the room, her face bright and clear and free from all preoccupation as she watched him. There was almost a spark of amusement as she looked at him. They sat in silence for some moments, and then Van Zant began in a tone of indignant self-reproach:

"I have been making a fool of myself—besides being a brute; and I have counteracted the whole effect of Wagner's masterpiece and of your father's genial hospitality. I am not fit for decent company!"

He looked steadily before him without raising his head. There was a strong contrast in the clear and almost cheerful ring of Ruth's voice as she said:

"You have been doing nothing of the kind. I think our talk was a good ending to our delightful evening, and I agreed with every word you said. I am sure my father did, too."

Instead of being appeased by these cheering

words, Van Zant's self-reproach only became more passionate, as, looking up, he continued:

"It was not only her views which irritated me." He arose from his chair and with his head bent forward, looking down frowning, he paced the room and burst forth:

"It may seem unchivalrous to say this of a lady and ungenerous to say it the moment she has left the room; but I cannot abide her! She is one of those superficial, affected people who caricature all I care for most and make me hate the things I admire and love and—want others to admire and love, and she forces me to take the other side which I do not like, and say things I do not mean —to make a fool of myself all round."

He stopped short, and must have felt that his pacing the room in this way was too familiar, too much at home, and his growing irritation was getting the better of him. He let himself down heavily in the chair again and resumed his former position.

"You are certainly too hard on her, if not on yourself," Ruth answered gently from her chair. "She does make mistakes and exaggerates—as we all do—but she is trying for the right thing and that is worth something."

Instead of appeasing him, Ruth's gentleness

only seemed to exasperate him the more. He spoke hastily, with growing irritation, and, by a curious turn, his resentment seemed now to include her, nay, to be mainly directed at her:

"Of course you must defend her! She is your friend. That's what disgusts me most: that you, who are her superior in every way, should be influenced by such a person; that you, who are so far above them, should be at all swayed by them. You may for the moment agree with what I say, but it does not affect you—they have their hold on you!"

There was not only resentment, there was pain in his voice as he uttered these words.

Ruth had silently risen from her chair and now stood beside him; she gently touched his shoulder with her hand as she gazed down upon him. He still sat motionless and looked down, but the touch of her hand had sent a thrill through his whole body.

"How *can* you say that, dear friend!" she said with gentle reproach and her voice grew richer and more touching as she proceeded: "What influence have they all over me compared with what you have had and have! Need I, must I, tell you that it is *you* who have made me see my whole life and all it means in a different light from what

I did before I met you? That it was *your* influence which caused me to give up my return to Europe and to devote myself to a new life here in my own home, and that I am happier and, I believe, more useful than I ever hoped to be? Need I tell you this, and that you have entered into all my thoughts—and that I feel, and shall always feel, the deepest gratitude to you?" There was a thrill of sincere emotion in her voice as she uttered these last words.

Van Zant rose abruptly and stood before her looking into her eyes, his face was flushed and he spoke rapidly in great excitement:

"Gratitude! That's it. But I do not *want* you to feel gratitude toward me. I am to you the mere impersonator of ideas, of truths, of platitudes, of moral maxims, an embodiment of general principles—without flesh and blood—and your *feelings* remain unmoved. I am a prig or a hypocrite—I don't know which! I am not good, I am bad—do you hear! All I cared for in saying all these fine things was *you,* you the woman, you the sweet girl; and I feel to you as a man feels to a woman, a boy to a girl, like the young fellow you danced with so much the other night—nay, though I am older, and am a prig, I feel more

deeply than that young fellow, Ruth, because I love you, Ruth, with all my heart, with——

What he saw in her eyes and in her face, what he said and what happened, it is not for us to say. What Mr. Ward found when he returned, what they said to him and he to them, we need not repeat. But we know that they were all supremely happy.

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